



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

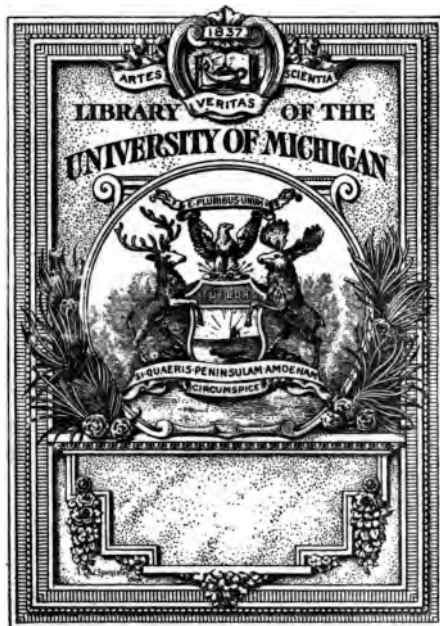
About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

RECOLLECTIONS OF
ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

I. T. MARTIN

A 839,820



E
415
F8
FS

**RECOLLECTIONS OF
ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT**

.

WILLIAM

WILLIAM



Elizabeth Benton Fremont.

OF
NATHAN FREEMONT

AND
HIS
DISCOVERIES



FREDERICK H. HITCHCOCK

NEW YORK

M. M. L.



Elizabeth Benton Fremont.

RECOLLECTIONS OF
ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

DAUGHTER OF THE PATHFINDER
GENERAL JOHN C. FRÉMONT AND
JESSIE BENTON FRÉMONT HIS WIFE

COMPILED BY
I. T. MARTIN



FREDERICK H. HITCHCOCK

NEW YORK

MCMXII

COPYRIGHT, 1912,
By I. T. MARTIN

CONTENTS

The March of Progress	9
Across the Isthmus of Panama in Forty-	
Nine	11
Early Days in California	25
Memories of the Court of Victoria	35
Paris Scenes	49
The Winter of Fifty-Three and 'Four . .	61
The Campaign of Fifty-Six	75
Bear Valley	83
Yosemite and Mount Bullion	101
Black Point and War Days	117
From Yuma to Prescott in Army Ambu-	
lances	135
Three Years in Prescott	153
The Year at Tucson	165
Finis	179

ILLUSTRATIONS

Elizabeth Benton Frémont . *Frontispiece*

Mrs. Frémont from a miniature painted
in 1845, carried from Washington to
California by Kit Carson and there
delivered to General Frémont . . . 64

Buffalo escaping from a prairie fire,
during the days of Frémont's explor-
ations 68

The Frémont cottage in Bear Valley in
1858 84

Miss Frémont and " Chiquita " . . . 90

John C. Frémont after a photograph
taken a few weeks before his death . 120

Headquarters of General Frémont at
Santa Barbara 146

The Los Angeles home given to Mrs.
Frémont 182

THE MARCH OF PROGRESS

THERE is an old English adage which says, "That the child that is born on a Thursday, has far to go," and I think most of my long life has been spent in verifying its truth.

When I was less than six months old, I was traveling with members of my Grandfather Benton's family, in a stage coach along what was then called the National Turnpike,—the road that in those days led from Washington to St. Louis. The stage turned turtle, rolled down an embankment and when the rescued grown people of the party regained their composure, they expected to find me fatally hurt from the fall.

When the stage driver picked me up out of the débris, however, I smiled in his face, and in handing me over to my grandfather, the driver said:

"Senator, this baby will make a good traveler."

Before I had reached the age of nine years, when most children were then still in the nursery, I had been taken twice to California, via the Isthmus of Darien, as Panama was

THE MARCH OF PROGRESS

then called, and had also made an ocean voyage to England.

When in London, a member of the Traveler's Club said to my father: "Your little girl should be presented for membership in our Club, for she has already traveled half again the number of miles necessary to render her eligible."

Since then, I have done considerable traveling, a great deal of it in our own country, and long enough ago to make the modes of travel then and now, stand out in striking contrast.

My first trip across Panama in '49, was made by boat and mules, and the journey consumed six wearisome days; my last trip in '58, by rail, consumed three hours and a half, so wonderful had been the march of progress in the new country.

ACROSS THE ISTHMUS OF PANAMA IN FORTY-NINE

WITH fast trains now flying daily from coast to coast, and with the Panama Canal nearing completion, it is hard to realize what a trip meant, from New York to California, in 1849. The memories of such a trip read like a romance of the long ago, in the light of present realities.

I crossed the Isthmus with my mother in those days, and though then but a small child, my memory of the event stands out clear and distinct, too vivid a picture for time to efface.

We left New York in March of 1849, and the first sight of palm trees and tropical growth came to view as the steamer neared Chagres. The little tender on which the passengers and mails were landed, was as small as a craft could well be and yet hold an engine, for it was planned to go as high as possible up the Chagres River.

It seemed like stepping down upon a toy, and after eight miles, it had to be abandoned for little dug-out canoes, the shallows and

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

obstructions of every kind making further travel in the tiny steamboat impossible.

The canoes were manned by crews of naked, screaming, barbarous negroes and Indians, who occasionally murdered the passengers if antagonized or aroused.

We were spared the terrors of the dug-out canoes, for through the courtesy of Mr. William Aspinwall, owner of the Pacific Mail Steamers and the then projected Panama Railroad, we were permitted to travel in the company's whale boat, manned by a responsible crew.

Most of the travelers of those days were compelled to take their chances of sleeping on the ground or in the huts of the Indians, and all too often contracted fevers from the night air and the tropical mists. The Company however, provided tents with canvas floors and walls, fitted out with clean linen cots, for the use of the crew and guests, the tents a protection not only against wild animals, but against the deadly dews that were so heavy that they demanded the further protection of a fly tent. The climate was so severe on Americans that any one sleeping on shore for even one night forfeited all life insurance, a rule made necessary for the protection of the insurance companies, so heavy was the toll of the Grim Reaper on that soil.

ACROSS THE ISTHMUS OF PANAMA IN FORTY-NINE

It took a long time to make those thirty miles of river travel in '49, for the boats were only poled along against the stiff current of the mountain river, but though a few miles were made each day, each hour was filled with thrilling interest and novelty. Sometimes for nearly a mile, the boat would go along gently, sometimes out in the stream, again close to the bank, under the over-arching branches of trees bent into the water and so matted by masses of flowering creepers that it seemed to glide along an aisle of flowers, through a great conservatory.

There I first saw the white and scarlet varieties of the passion-flower, as well as other flowers both brilliant and fragrant, for which I know no name.

At times the boat would have to put out into the stream and away from the shade; the heat was intense, particularly hard for the Americans to endure. Now and then the boat would be drawn to the shore where the passengers were compelled to alight, while the men in charge of the little boat would clear a pathway through the dense growth, using their long knives as scythes. The Indians and Jamaica negroes of which the crew was composed, enjoyed the water to the full, jumping in and out of the boat like so many

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

porpoises, giving a shove when it seemed easier thus to make progress.

With all the advantages of the whale boat, however, it took three days to reach Gorgona, the boat making but a few miles each day, and there we again deserted the boat for mules, which carried the party across the mountain.

When we reached Gorgona, there were hundreds of people camped out on the hill-slopes, living under shelter that masqueraded as tents, patiently awaiting an opportunity of leaving for Panama. There were many women and babies in the group, and the uncertainty of everything was making them ill; loss of hope brings loss of strength; they were all living on salt provisions, not fit for the hot unhealthy climate, and Death stalked among them like a pestilence.

One of the passengers fell prostrate from sun stroke and was obliged to return in the canoes to take the next steamer back to the United States.

The Alcalde of the village had invited us with some other Americans to a breakfast; the chief dish, a baked monkey, looking for all the world like a child burned to death! The iguana or large lizard, so common along the river, was another of the delicacies served at that memorable meal.

ACROSS THE ISTHMUS OF PANAMA IN FORTY-NINE

The house of the Alcalde was of great interest to us, with its thatched roof on poles and wattled sides, looking like a magnified vegetable crate more than a human habitation. Unbleached sheeting had been tacked over the place in honor of the Americans, and the walls were adorned with four lithographs—the “Three Marys,” garbed at least as the originals should be, even though the pictures were the merest daubs. The fourth picture was wonderful to behold, and depicted still another Mary—a black-haired, red cheeked, staring young woman in a flaming red dress and ermine tippets, a pink rose in her hand, and underneath, the inscription:

MARY,
WIFE OF JAMES K. POLK,
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES!

The distance from Gorgona to Panama was about twenty-one miles, but in those days it was distance, not a road. There was only a mule track connecting the two places—more of a trough than a track—with mule staircases and occasional steps of at least four feet, and only wide enough to permit the passage of a single animal. The self-same trail that had been followed since the early days of the Spanish Conquest, and this trail followed the face of the country as it pre-

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

sented itself—straight up the sides of the steepest heights to the summit, then straight down again to the base.

There were no bridges across the streams, which were forded at times or when the stream was narrow, the mules gathered their legs under them and jumped across.

When they decided to leap, it was well enough for the rider who could retain his seat; if not, he fell into the water, and many a traveler in this way secured broken bones, a collection of choice bruises and a thorough wetting.

The most advanced baggage smasher of to-day cannot hope to compare with the baggage smasher in that day of the Isthmus transfer. Indians, mules and cows were pressed into service to handle the baggage which usually consisted of extra large trunks, made necessary by the long journey.

The slender Indians, bending under the weight of a trunk carried between them on poles, and the thin ill-fed little mules, which almost disappeared under the load of trunks, valises and bags, both had a way of getting rid of their load when tired of it, by merely tossing it aside.

There were very narrow defiles worn through the rocks, where the passengers could go through only in single file, even the

ACROSS THE ISTHMUS OF PANAMA IN FORTY-NINE

men riding sidewise, for lack of room to sit the usual way, and at one of these narrow defiles our party came upon a cow, loaded with trunks and bags. She was measuring her wide horns against the narrow entrance, as her load prevented her twisting through. There we waited until some solution of the difficulty presented itself, which the cow finally settled by rubbing the load off her back, leaving the debris of the broken trunks and smashed baggage as she proudly continued her journey, unhampered.

Two days of similar experiences were encountered before Panama was reached in April, 1849. Only one steamship had preceded the one upon which we had traveled, and its passengers had been taken up the coast to San Francisco, on "The California," the first of the line sent round the Horn. That steamer was to have returned and taken the passengers from Panama. It did not return, however, all the crew having deserted to go to the mines, and none could be induced to take their places. The madness of the gold fever was on and seemed to have taken hold of every one in California. We were detained at Panama for seven long weeks, until "The Panama," the second steamship, arrived from New York.

Several thousand Americans were cooped

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

up in Panama, none of them prepared for detention, and the suffering was great. Another monthly Isthmus party brought in the mail, in many cases containing money sadly needed by so many. But no one was authorized to touch it, since it was made up for San Francisco, and detained like the Americans.

The Consul, a foreigner, would not interfere, but the travelers met the emergency in the usual Yankee fashion. A public meeting was called, and a committee of twelve chosen from among the American commissioners, custom house officers and persons of personal and political distinction, who were authorized to open the mail forthwith and distribute it.

Our stay in Panama was not at all one-sided, and had its pleasant aspects, as well as the anxiety of the delay. We spent the time at the home of Madame Arce, a home which I remember for its wonderful red tiling throughout. The bath room at this house was a real novelty and luxury, and might be termed the primitive shower bath! The room was apart from the house proper, red tiled like the house, and boasted of neither windows, shutters or shades—just open squares to let in the light and air! The floor was built on a slant, and was deluged with water once or twice daily, to keep the place

cool. The native women "bath attendants," always young and always slender, daily filled the row of jars that were part of the bath fixtures, with cool water. These jars ranged in size from the small jar not much larger than an ordinary vase, to those at least four feet high.

When the bather entered the bath room, the small jar of water was first poured over her head by the attendant, followed by pouring from the jars of increasing size, until the contents of the largest jar had been thus emptied. This was necessary as the tropical heat made one shudder at the first dash of water, and the smaller quantity prepared one for the chill of the final deluge. The bather dried herself in the sun—towels were unheard of there—and if the bather was a child, she varied the monotony of the drying process and kept warm by chasing the large iguanas, which were plentiful, about the place.

The bath room was used at different times of the day by different people, the men having certain hours, the women other hours, and the children in groups, in their own turn.

A gallery surrounded the house of Madame Arce and overlooked the square occupied by the Catholic Cathedral and Convent. I recall among the delights of a happy child-

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

hood, many incidents connected with the stay in the Arce home, not the least of them, the joy with which I watched from this gallery, the young novices of the convent run up the belfry tower to see who could first reach the top and ring out the joyous peal of the Angelus Bell.

The nuns of the convent became attached to us and were wont to send us the most delightful dulces, made from the native fruits and flowers and held together with native sugar. The memory of their delightful taste is still present!

California is now beginning to introduce a novel way of serving oranges—just as they were served in the home of Madame Arce, so many years ago. The oranges are peeled to the pulp, stabbed with silver forks, piled high on delicate china platters, and served with tiny squares of bread, making a delicious lunch.

A ring-tail monkey was the pet of the Arce household. I had been taught by my old “mammy” that monkeys held the souls of bad people and was told when passing one with a hand organ, always to turn aside my head, as I gave the unfortunate creature a penny. Consequently, I did not make friends with the monkey at Panama and the little

animal seemed to realize that I was afraid of him.

One day he was swinging from one of the many "Dutch Doors," of the house, his chain longer than usual, when he sprung at me, wound his tail around my neck and chattered in fiendish glee in my face, much to my everlasting fright and dismay. My frantic screams brought assistance, but I still remember the cold, smooth, snake like feeling of that tail.

Madame Arce would take no remuneration from us, so when we were finally ready to embark for California, my mother presented her with an exquisitely beautiful tortoise shell box, filled with gold pieces, which were to be divided among the pet charities of the hostess, the good nuns of the neighboring convent to receive a portion, in recognition of the delightful dulces with which they had favored us.

While at Panama, I witnessed a scene which remains bright in my memory. One morning from beneath the balcony window, there came the sound of a voice filled with genuine sorrow and grief. A young Indian, carrying a child of about three years, was walking beneath the shade, filling the air with lamentations. Mother called to him to bring the child into the house, that it was

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

very ill, and the Indian interrupted his wailing long enough to cry out, in his own tongue :

“ It is dying now ! ”

The child was brought into the house in the agonies of death, and lived but a little while.

The next morning the funeral procession of the child passed the house, illustrating the theory that the death of an infant is a cause for thankfulness. The little one, robed in white, with ruffles and lace and ribbons and wreaths of flowers, lay upon an open bier, carried by men who were singing loudly and lustily. The father followed, his face haggard and his wistful eyes riveted upon the babe—but singing !

Women in their holiday attire followed the procession, violins and guitars played quick, cheerful music, and but for the presence of the dead child, it would be hard to realize that it was not a wedding festivity.

When we realize our utter helplessness to shield those we love from the chances of life, can we say that these people are wrong in their belief ?

The failure of the steamers to arrive at Panama had told upon everyone ; to the Americans it was a realization of the despondency of a shipwrecked people. Those who had through tickets to California still hoped

ACROSS THE ISTHMUS OF PANAMA IN FORTY-NINE

against hope, and finally the two steamers came into port simultaneously, one from California and the other from around the Horn, both reaching Panama in the night and within an hour of each other. Their guns were mistaken for a second fire from the first steamer, and great was the joy of the people when they beheld the two steamers ready to load the passengers and take them to the "Promised Land."

Everyone had been listening, longing and waiting for the sound of those guns for weeks, and though the welcome sound broke the stillness of a moonlight night, before two o'clock in the morning all the Americans had gathered and crowded to the ramparts.

The Panama, the steamer that had come around the Horn, was in good condition, while the sister ship was in disorder and discomfort, the captain having died from fever. We sailed on the Panama, a steamer with accommodations for eighty, but carrying on that eventful trip more than four hundred passengers.

The deck was parceled out into sleeping quarters and mother and I slept under the folds of an American flag, which was thrown across the spanker boom to form a tent. We shared this flag tent with a Mrs. Grey and enjoyed the delights of sleeping in the open

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

on the placid waters of the Pacific. The remainder of the journey was devoid of hardship; there were many charming people on board and one of the party, Major Derby—"John Phoenix"—gave way to his wildest fun and spirits, and managed the theatricals that were acted on deck each evening, in a way that would have made the fortune of a theatrical manager.

Life indeed seemed bright and full of happy possibilities as we entered the harbor of the "Golden Gate," and finally set foot in the country where fortune awaited those who had a "stomach for a fight," as my Grandfather Benton put it—and most of the pioneers of a rugged fortune never doffed their fighting armor. There was a test for ours at once, as our landing was made by our being carried through the surf by the sailors.

A few low houses and many makeshift tents covered the base of some of the wind-swept, treeless hills, over which rolled the chilling June fog of San Francisco. Ships of every description were swinging with the tide, deserted by crew and passengers, in search of Aladdin's Lamp, with which they dreamed of conquering the Gold Fields.

EARLY DAYS IN CALIFORNIA

ON the rough journey to the coast, my mother's health had been seriously impaired by hæmorrhages of the lungs, but the delightful climate of California soon brought back her health, as my father was ever certain that it would.

When we reached California in 1849, my mother was the proud possessor of the only carriage in the territory. It was a six seated surrey built for her in New Jersey and sent around the Horn. It was fitted with every convenience then known to carriage builders, designed with an eye to render still more agreeable the delightful open air life in California.

The carriage contrasted wonderfully with the local *carreta*, with their heavy wooden wheels, drawn by cumbersome oxen. In fact, it was quite as much of a luxurious contrast as is the modern touring car of today to that surrey—another link in the chain in the evolution of open air travel.

We lived a nomadic life at first, driving back and forth between San Jose, Monterey

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

and San Francisco, very rarely sleeping even for one night under a roof. My mother had the cushions drawn together in the surrey so as to form a mattress, while I slept in the boot—the apron drawn up over me when we were close enough to the sea for the chilling night fogs to roll in with the misty breezes. My father and the other men of the party slept in the open on their blankets, or in hammocks when trees were near enough for them to be hung.

Often during the day time, we would stop for a while at one or another of the numerous Spanish ranches, where we were always made welcome by both men and women, all bitterness of the late war forgotten. The women took an especial delight in exhibiting their babies, talking clothes, (as women ever have a way of doing) and asking myriad questions about housekeeping, glad to get even a glimpse of life in the “states,” from one so recently “out,” as was my mother.

✓ In those days large families were the rule, not the exception, and twenty children in a family not at all uncommon. I remember one lady telling my mother that she had twenty-four children, and I can still see her pleasant smile at my mother's astonishment. The mother of that numerous family was a tall, stately matron with a wealth of snow white

EARLY DAYS IN CALIFORNIA

hair, and an ease of movement that bespoke her perfect health. I was delighted at hearing of such a large family, for my favorite playmate in Washington was one of twelve children, and I could only dream of the unalloyed happiness of having twice that many under one roof!

When my father had to go up into the mountains, we made our home at Monterey, in a large section of a house owned by the Castro family. It was a fine old adobe built in the usual fashion, around three sides of a court, which made a fine play-ground for Modesta Castro and myself. Here we two built a quaint baby house out of a big rock, so soft that with kitchen knives, we dug rooms for the small dolls, the little Spaniard learning English, and I Spanish while at play.

We had a worthy English woman from Sydney, a Mrs. Macavoy, who kept house for us, my mother's yedra poisoned feet (made still more painful by the heroic medicinal treatment of those days) making it hard for her to move about for many months. During this period, the healthy well-kept two year old baby of Mrs. Macavoy made a charming little live doll for me to play with—the lad since risen to distinction in the northern part of the state, where for many years, he was sheriff of his county.

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

The splendid riding of the Californians, who passed by our windows as they drove in the wild cattle to be slaughtered, was a real delight to us, especially after my mother induced them to ride out of sight before they began the killing.

All the journeys of my father throughout the state were made on fine California horses, some presented to him by a cousin of the famous Spanish General Andreads Pico. I may be pardoned for quoting from Jeremiah Lynch's recent book, "A Senator of the Fifties," the description of one of my father's long rides—which was worthy of note.

"Only a year prior to the gold discovery, while the land yet nestled in the lap of oblivion, Colonel Frémont, Commander of Volunteers and the Jason of California, was hastily summoned from Los Angeles to Monterey. Leaving the former place at early dawn with two companions, he rode one hundred and twenty-five miles before halting for the night. They had nine horses as a caballada, driving six ahead of them running loose on the trail, and changing every twenty miles. The second day they made a hundred and thirty-five miles. On the third day they did not start until eleven o'clock, yet traveled seventy miles, and on the fourth day they

EARLY DAYS IN CALIFORNIA

dashed into Monterey at three o'clock, having ridden ninety miles since morning, and four hundred and twenty miles in four days. Frémont and his party left on their return the next day at four in the afternoon, galloping forty miles that afternoon, a hundred and twenty the next day, and a hundred and thirty on the two succeeding days, arriving in Los Angeles on the ninth day from their departure.

The distance going and coming is eight hundred and forty miles, and the trail for the entire distance led over steep hills, down gloomy defiles and precipitous declivities, and across wild unpeopled valleys, where only the sun and compass guided them. The actual hours in the saddle were seventy-six, about eleven miles an hour.

Frémont rode the same horse forty miles on the afternoon he left Monterey and ninety miles more the day following, thus making one hundred and thirty miles in twenty-four hours, on one steed.

This charger, then left loose without a master, led the cavalcade thirty miles farther that afternoon, until they came to his pastures. With the exception of one relay from Monterey, the men rode the same nine animals going and returning. The horses were unshod and carried with riders the

heavy Mexican saddles and bridles then universally used. The whole adventure rivals Alexander's pursuit of Darius in Bactria. No Arabian steeds could surpass this feat. The California horses were relatively small, but with deep withers and broad flanks. Except in weight and color they very much resembled the Arabian stallions to be seen in the streets of Cairo. They were fed very little grain, but the rich grasses of the valleys near the shore were heavy and sustaining."

I remember a method of treating horses in those days that may be interesting even to-day. A friend had ridden one of our horses too hard, fed him fresh wheat and then wondered why the horse was foundered!

There were no veterinarians then, and quick relief must be at hand if the horse was to be saved. One of the young Castros took charge of the animal, lighted rolls of linen and as the flames died out, the smoking fumes were held to the horse's head (which had been covered with a blanket) bringing instant relief and a speedy cure. The same treatment was later used on horses in New York and in Paris, with like result. But the California instance I remember well. My mother ever ready to respond in an emer-

EARLY DAYS IN CALIFORNIA

gency, quickly contributing some of her lingerie—the only linen at hand.

My mother's knowledge of Spanish was a great help to her in those days of travel in Central America and California, proving the wisdom of my grandfather, when he had her learn the "neighbor language," as he termed it, "that she might talk over the back fence without the fear of the trouble that an interpreter might easily foment."

All our traveling in California was done during the dry season, when the days proved the right of the state to be called "the Italy of America," as my father called the climate in his report to the government. The phrase was so appropriate that it has been revived and given wide currency by recent authors, in connection with volumes treating of the wonders of the State.

In 1849 however, the winter in California was particularly wet, the rains unusually heavy and continuous, and much indignation was expressed because my father had referred to the state in the above terms, the papers expressing the wish that the coiner of that phrase "might be dragged through the mud of his Italian climate," that he might the better appreciate its beauties!

During that long rainy winter, my mother and Mrs. Macavoy spent the days seated by

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

the big open fire in the long adobe room of our home, sewing, for there were no sewing machines, and the family work had all to be hand-made. The room was made cheerful and bright by the fire, the comfortable Chinese cane chairs and rows of recently imported Canton China, and the Macavoy baby and I played on the furs that were liberally spread on the uncarpeted floor.

When my father was with us, we read much together—for we had plenty of books and papers, the irregular mails never failing to bring a plentiful supply, which added much to the enjoyment and cosy shelter of the thick-walled adobe.

As my mother grew stronger, we spent more time in San Francisco and San Jose, particularly in the latter place, and at the time that the constitutional convention was held, making plans for the admission of the Territory of California as a state.

It was there that strong pressure was brought to bear upon my father, in an effort to induce him to lend his influence towards bringing California in as a slave state.

It was pointed out to him that by using slave labor upon his mining estate, "The Mariposa," instead of paying five dollars a day to laborers, he would soon be a millionaire.

EARLY DAYS IN CALIFORNIA

In those days millionaires were few and far between. The temptation was great, but my father resolutely cast it aside, determined to sink or swim the sea of fortune with free labor.

My mother worked as hard as did my father for the admission of the free state, many a vote being won by the sight of her, a delicate young southern woman, cheerfully doing her own work rather than take any steps that might influence the adoption of slavery into our splendid territory. Mrs. Macavoy, the English woman whom we had when we first reached California, soon achieved a home of her own, and to replace her seemed impossible.

My mother by birth and tradition was opposed to slavery. Her mother, a Virginian, and a member of the Colonization Society of that state, had after the death of her father, Colonel McDowell of Rockbridge County, immediately freed all the slaves he had left her, starting some of them in trades, sending others to Canada or Liberia as they preferred, and always looking out for those who remained in the United States.

My father believed in those days that California was the paradise of free labor, an opinion that he never changed to the end of his days. The climate and the conditions

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

under which a man depending upon his day's wages might obtain a home of his own seemed better in this state than elsewhere in the wide world, and had slavery been introduced, its blighting effect would have been felt for years after its final abolition. As I now witness the sight here in Los Angeles of thousands of families of moderate means, enjoying their simple bungalow homes, I realize how wise was his judgment.

My father was one of the first two senators of California, having drawn the short term, and at the close of his official duties in Washington, he returned again to San Francisco, where my brother Charlie, one of the first sons of the golden west (of American parentage), was born. It was then that my father and mother decided upon a year of foreign travel, the only thorough vacation that my father ever had; and we started for England.

MEMORIES OF THE COURT OF VICTORIA

AWAY back in the days of the dim and dusty past, when America was considered a new country and when Americans in London were few and far between, my father and mother embarked for foreign shores, determined to forget all cares for a year, devoting that brief portion of their busy lives to one long dreamless day of pleasure.

It was in 1852 when my father reached this decision—shortly after he had proudly raised the American flag over California—and of course, my mother was filled with happiness, in anticipation of the treat in store for her. For in those days, a trip across the ocean was an uncommon thing, and a presentation at Court—the thought of it was like unto a picture from the pages of Fairyland!

In the days of early hardships, when father surmounted what loomed up like insurmountable obstacles, not a care ever furrowed his brow that did not also leave a trace of its imprint on mother's young face. When she gave her hand and her heart into his

keeping, she took for her very own, the words of Ruth:

“ Whithersoever thou shalt go, I will go: and where thou shalt dwell, I also will dwell. Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.”

And whether the pathway led along the desert plains or into the primrose way, my father and mother were one and inseparable in heart and mind, until the Grim Reaper severed their lives in twain.

When we started out from San Francisco for London, my brother Charles, afterwards Admiral Frémont of the U. S. Navy, was then a sturdy lad of two years. Crossing the Atlantic, we encountered a March storm, and the little brother who was destined to shine later as an active naval officer, was tied to the railing of the mainmast, where it passed through the ladies' cabin. He was permitted to romp to the length of the four foot rope which held him firmly, though I remember that he spent more time standing on his head than on his feet, such was the fury of the waves!

We reached London at length, and my parents found their old friends, the Abbott Lawrences of Boston and Lowell, waiting to give them a hearty welcome and to initiate them into the inner circles of London society, Mr.

MEMORIES OF THE COURT OF VICTORIA

Lawrence then representing the United States in England.

The Lawrences had a daughter Kitty, a young lady about the same age as my mother, and the two became inseparable companions. The women of the party started in to enjoy the social diversions of the metropolis, and for seven long weeks attended every social function. Some Grand Dame of London was teaching the etiquette of the Court of Victoria to the young women who were to be presented, part of the training consisting of practising the proper curtsy to be made before the Queen. Southern girls were taught such things at home in those days, and made the same exquisitely graceful curtsy to their mothers as the "great ladies" abroad made to the Queen, so that mother was an apt pupil.

The momentous day finally arrived and my mother and Kitty Lawrence were ready for the presentation. I well remember their starting forth and have often heard mother relate how the drive to the Palace was filled with interest to the young Americans, the first portion of it made in good time, thus avoiding the scrutiny of the populace lined up on the curb stone, ready to criticize the costumes of the speeding guests. When the heart of the city was reached, however, the

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

drive was slow and laborious, through densely packed crowds, whose more or less frank criticism was plainly heard by occupants of the passing vehicles.

My mother in the full bloom of youth, must have presented a pretty picture with her wealth of dark brown hair, her pink and white complexion and light hazel eyes, aglow with the excitement of the moment. She wore a gown of pink silk with pink moire train, trimmed with roses shaded from red to delicate pink and white, pretty as the natural blossoms, a beauty peculiar to all French artificial flowers. "A harmony of roses," is what mother liked to call that court gown, and it must have accentuated her beauty in those days, when she was a matron of less than twenty-eight years.

Mrs. Lawrence escorted mother to the waiting room of the Palace. In some manner the party were separated and mother found herself standing in the embrasure of a window which overlooked the entrance of the court, when a stately lady addressed her with:

"You are a stranger here, may I point out to you the notables as they enter the Palace?"

This lady proved to be Lady Clarendon, whose husband was later made Viceroy of

MEMORIES OF THE COURT OF VICTORIA

Ireland, where his popularity was greatly enhanced by his wife, a woman of unusually winsome manners.

When mother finally entered the Royal drawing room, she beheld Queen Victoria with the Prince Consort, Albert Edward, at her side, a picture of devotion.

There were more guests present at that drawing room than usual, and perhaps more representatives of the nobility than are usually gathered together upon such an occasion. Among the distinguished persons of the day, was the Duke of Wellington, a man well on in years, his silver hair lighting up his face in a striking manner; also the Minister of Russia, Dean of the Diplomatic Corps; and Count Walewski, a cousin of the Prince President, and always his true and trusted friend.

There was considerable feeling among the Diplomatic Corps on that occasion and as usual, since time began, a woman was at the bottom of it. The brilliant wife of Count Walewski was an Italian by birth, a beautiful woman with dark eyes, fair skin and golden hair. She was the thorn in the side of many a lady of state, but her joy was unconfined on this Presentation Day, for by order of Napoleon, her husband had been made Ambassador to England at the eleventh

hour, and thus he held first rank for the day among the diplomats. So the Italian Countess, regal in her beauty, proudly led the way to the throne. Gowned in pink and white and wearing a rope of pearls that was once the property of the Empress Josephine, the Countess seemed to realize to the full the social distinction that was hers even for the one brief hour, and was proudly making the most of it.

A striking and memorable figure of that presentation scene was the great Duke of Wellington. He walked back and forth behind the throne, a privilege accorded only to Wellington, all others being forbidden to either move or speak in the presence of the Queen. By a strange coincidence, back of the throne was a painting representing one of the battles of the first Napoleon—the work of a master hand and so life-like that one could hear in fancy the din of war.

As the great Wellington walked back and forth in front of this picture he seemed to be lost in thought. Was he living over again the scenes of that terrific conflict? The thought was insistent and impressive.

During the presentation my mother was self-possessed, trying hard to remember every historic personage and incident that like a panorama was fleeting before her, that

MEMORIES OF THE COURT OF VICTORIA

she might write the details to her dearly loved father at even-tide; for, never was the day so busy nor the way so weary that the setting sun did not see a letter penned by her to her father, so that even though distance separated them, they were always one at night fall.

To my father the presentation scene was like a wedding, for as he naively put it in later years, the men were of no importance at all. The ladies had the day and they claimed it for their very own. But on this day father was the centre of a group of Englishmen intent upon hearing of America, that wonderful new country, and of the taking of California. For he was not looked upon as a stranger by these men, as he had been made a gold medalist of the Royal Geographical Society, in honor of his western explorations.

My parents thoroughly enjoyed their stay in London, and were entertained not only by the Lawrences, but by Sir Henry and Lady Bulwer, whom they had known in Washington, when Bulwer was of the Diplomatic Corps. At "Sion House"—Northumberland—mother came to her first realization of the fact that lords and ladies of the English nobility are, after all, but human, like other men and women. Accustomed to reading of the titled women in fairy tales and novels of

the day, it was quite an awakening for her to hear Lady Bulwer say to the Duchess of Sutherland:

“ *Susan*, come and meet Mrs. Frémont, of *North America!* ”

This “ North America ” phrase grated on mother’s ears, who afterwards told her American friends that every time she heard the expression, she imagined herself out on the weary plains, decked out in the multi-colored skirt and bodice of the American Squaw!

While in London, our compatriot, George Peabody, celebrated for his philanthropy both in America and England, one night gave my parents his box at the leading theatre on an evening when Queen Victoria has ordered a special play produced, which dealt with the French Revolution. The Peabody box was directly opposite the Queen’s box—so that we were afforded an unusual opportunity to obtain a good view of the Queen and her party.

Anxious to give me a glimpse of Victoria, mother took me with her. I was the only child in the theatre, and was therefore, the cynosure of all eyes, but was not at all abashed. My life in Washington had accustomed me to strange people and I was not one whit self-conscious. I was pleased that the queen

MEMORIES OF THE COURT OF VICTORIA

noticed me, though I was at first bitterly disappointed at seeing a real queen, who did not wear a crown or carry a sceptre. For in all the fairy tales I had ever read, never had a queen dared to present herself minus these details so necessary to the mind of the child! Gradually, however, I became reconciled to the lack of dramatic details which I had always considered indispensable to the well appointed costume of royalty.

The celebrated actor Frederick Lemaître, was the star of the play produced on that evening by order of Victoria, and the impression he created remains with me today. The play dealt with the saving of a girl of noble lineage from the guillotine by a peasant, the girl marrying him in order to save her life in those dark days.

When the Revolution had drawn to a close, the family of the girl wanted her to return to them; the Restoration made it no longer necessary for her to live the life of a peasant's wife. The husband joined with the parents in beseeching the girl to return to her home, explaining to her that while his love for her knew no bounds, he would rather give her up than force her to eat the cabbage soup and dry bread which must fall to her lot if she remained by his side. The girl, however, resolutely stood by her husband, who finally

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

accepted her sacrifice as one more addition to those innumerable sacrifices piled up on the altar of love, since man and woman were made.

Queen Victoria, on the evening in question, wore a blue satin gown, with low neck and short sleeves, of course, a rope of coral and pearls encircling her throat, and a tiara of diamonds in her hair. The play of emotion on the face of the queen, as the actor depicted the old, yet ever new, struggle between love and duty, was reflected on the face of the Prince Consort, showing that beneath all the stately dignity, there beat human hearts, learned in the pathos of love. Now and then the face of the queen softened, as the more tender emotions of the heart were flashed from the stage—as though those sentiments found an answering echo within her.

My remembrance of Victoria, however, is a picture of royal pride, surrounded by her ladies-in-waiting, who remained standing during the entire performance. The Prince Consort, also standing, leaned on the back of the chair of his queen. Evidently in those days, there were no laws compelling employers to provide seats for women workers, nor was the much vaunted "equality of the sexes," sanctioned by the Prince Consort! His air of quiet deference to his wife was

MEMORIES OF THE COURT OF VICTORIA

perhaps one of his most striking characteristics.

By a strange coincidence, on that night of the memorable theatre party, mother was gowned much after the fashion of Victoria, wearing a gown of pale blue moire, softened with a shower of white, and around her throat there was a string of corals.

But all things come to an end—even the fairy tales of happy childhood—and so the memory of that theatre party soon faded, lost in the gaiety of the moment, experience following experience, with almost riotous confusion.

Miss Burdett Coutts always gave a dinner to the Duke of Wellington on his birthday, and as was the custom of the day, the guest of honor was permitted to name those whom he especially wished to be bidden to the festivities. The Duke accordingly, requested that father and mother be included among the guests. Preparations were being made for the event, when the first cloud of that happy day appeared in the midst of a sunlit sky, and the truth of the axiom that “man proposes, but God disposes,” was forced deep into the heart of my mother.

The Kossuth was visiting in America and when he reached St. Louis, John Randolph Benton, my mother's young brother,

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

was selected to deliver the address of welcome. The young man was a German scholar of unusual proficiency and especially fitted to deliver an address in that language, there being then no one of sufficient prominence in St. Louis who spoke Hungarian.

He had just attained his majority, and the future loomed up promisingly before him; but the excitement, and the extreme heat and bad water, served as the undoing of that brilliant youth. After the address had been delivered and Kossuth had started for other shores, the young man fell ill of a fever, and ere twenty-four hours had elapsed Death had claimed one more shining mark, and gloom enveloped the home of my grandfather.

The news came slowly across the water to mother, who crushed by the blow, hurried to Paris, hoping to lighten the burden of her loss by a change of scene. That the scenes of the gay French capital did not, however, blind her to the sorrow that was gnawing at her heart is evidenced by the fact that for four weeks she was kept in a darkened room, her eyes bandaged and blindness threatened as a result of the constant weeping that followed the receipt of the ill-fated letter from her father.

Finally, however, she rallied from the

MEMORIES OF THE COURT OF VICTORIA

shock as Time, that merciful healer, bound up the wounds, and later in life, even though she learned that a thorn comes with every rose, she knew that the roses are none the less sweet for that! And among the thorns and brambles of life she found many friends who were always willing to lighten the load, even as she was ever ready to lighten that of the humblest, wayfarer who chanced across her path.

PARIS SCENES

WHEN we decided to spend a year or two in Paris, we were most fortunate in securing the home of Lady Dundonald, an English woman who was leaving Paris for a time and who was glad to rent her beautiful home to a careful tenant.

The house was situated on the Champs Elysées, half way between the Arc de Triomphe and Ronde Pointe. It was built like all French houses on a line with the pavement, and beyond the porte cochère, which had a large gate, was a beautiful fountain of running water filled with gold fish, which divided the court yard from the lovely sunken garden, making a charming scene.

The room that had been used as a waiting room by the Dundonald footman was used as a fencing room by our family, and I was one of the very few girls who were taught to fence in those days.

My mother drove the first pair of English horses ever driven in Paris, except those owned by the Emperor. They were perfectly matched dapple grays, with silver manes and

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

tails. When we were leaving Paris some eighteen months after, many flattering offers were made for them, but to all my father replied:

“ I bought them for a birthday present for my wife, and no one else shall ever drive them in Paris.”

When we left Paris they were sent to a friend in Bucharest.

The House of Lady Dundonald has a story all its own, an eloquent illustration of the “ woman scorned ” theory.

There had been war between Chili and Peru, Lord Dundonald doing noble work for the winning side, and saving the day against tremendous odds. The South American Republic wanted to reward the hero in a fitting manner, but between their good intentions and the rigorous laws governing English army officers stood an iron wall which made it impossible for an officer to accept a gift in reward of services, however valiant they might have been. So the Republic decided to send a handsome cash present to Lady Dundonald, intending, of course, that she should present it to her husband and thus evade the law covering the matter. They gave two hundred thousand dollars which was considerably more of a fortune in those

PARIS SCENES

times than it is to-day, duly presenting it to Lady Dundonald who graciously received it.

She did not tell them that she was not living with her husband. She simply took the money—and kept it—and when Lord Dundonald, that brave and dauntless soldier found it out, he could only gnash his teeth and cry out against the duplicity of woman, when her love was turned to hate!

Lady Dundonald made good use of the money, and at once set out to build for herself the most artistic home in Paris, where she would be free to live as she pleased. Lady Blessington and Count D'Orsay were the two persons accounted then in Europe most noted for their exquisite taste, and to these two, who happened to be great friends of hers, Lady Dundonald left the building and the furnishing of the place, and right royally did they carry out the commission, as was attested by every nook and corner of the house.

It was the first house I had ever seen where every bit of the furniture did not match, and the novelty appealed to me with increasing force as I grew to enjoy it the more.

Just one cabinet in the house was locked. Lady Dundonald carried the key, and that ebony cabinet was a veritable treasure trove, filled with the rarest silver, delicate china and bric-à-brac, and from the center hung a great

lump of purest amber, with two or three flies entangled within the pretty mass, the very essence of art and beauty.

The main salon of the house was like a fairy bower, with its heavy plate mirrors and Italian clocks, and overlooked the gay Champs Elysées with its ever changing and always interesting scenes. The mirror over the fireplace, in its Florentine gold frame, was a work of art in itself. It could be raised like a window, disappearing in the wall above and leaving in its beautiful frame a large plate glass window pane, from which we had a splendid view of the street below, perhaps unequalled in all Paris.

The library, opening to the left of the main salon, was finished in gay reds, while to the right was the state bed room, gorgeous in its trappings of pale green moire, with touches of pink silk here and there. It was in this room that my sister Annie was born—the only Parisienne of the family!

The parlor was finished in pale green, pink and red, the furniture covered with satin of these hues, with many white and gold chairs scattered about, too fragile for use, and evidently made only to admire.

Between the main salon and its flanking rooms were several beautiful jardinières, each arranged in front of a sheet of plate

PARIS SCENES

glass which gave an unobstructed view through the adjoining rooms, with their mirrored mantles. These jardinières were filled weekly with fresh flowers and the memory of the beauty of the mass of blooms, reflected in the mirrors, lives with me still. At night when the great chandeliers, with their innumerable hanging pendants of purest crystal, were ablaze with light, the beauty of the rooms was seen again through the smaller mirrors over the fireplaces in the adjoining rooms, the lights, the brilliant cut glass of the chandeliers and the flowers all blending into one harmonious whole, making a fire-light picture beautiful to behold. The rooms were multiplied by the arrangement of the mirrors into a crystal maze of surpassing beauty, which bespoke the artistic talent of the designers of the house.

The Dundonald coat-of-arms, which Lady Dundonald did not discard with her husband, was emblazoned on the dining room chairs. It was really the only thing in the house that reminded one of the absent lord and perhaps represented his share of the fund with which the place was purchased. The coat-of-arms consisted of two greyhounds, rampant, on a long chain which reached from the collar of the hounds to the shield. The motto: "Labor et virtus," entwined with the coat-of-arms,

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

was never taken seriously by Lady Dundonald. The source of her great wealth had nothing to do with it, for she labored not, neither did she spin, and she lived her life in her own way, content if only the life brought its full share of pleasure.

There were no closets in the house, but on each floor one room was set apart as a general closet for the use of the household.

All the ingenuity of the designers seemed to have been expended on the marble bath room, fitted as it was with an open fire-place, a huge mirror placed above it, the silver faucets exquisitely carved and representing the heads and necks of delicate swans. The entire room was of marble, the tub and floor of the same material, and all the trimming of silver.

From the balcony of our Paris house we witnessed the triumphant entry of the Prince President, Napoleon III, as the Emperor of the French, on Napoleon's Day, December the Second. The streets were lined four deep with the military, and mounted troops were everywhere in evidence.

I remember the impressive spectacle presented as the Emperor rode alone in that great procession, no one within one hundred and twenty feet of him, in front or in the rear. He held his hat in one hand and the reins in

PARIS SCENES

the other. Defenceless, he presented a picture worthy of the great Napoleon.

“ No guard shall surround me as I enter Paris,” he had ordered. “ If I die at the hands of an assassin, I die alone! ”

A tiger skin saddle decorated the horse which the Emperor rode, and following him at a distance of one hundred and twenty feet, as he had prescribed, rode Marshal Lowenstein, a hale old man of eighty, a trusted aide of the great Napoleon and his only surviving Marshal.

He was followed by a remnant of the valiant men who had served their country under the Great Napoleon.

That day was a day of tense excitement at our home. My father had invited a number of guests to witness the entry of the Emperor, and so great was the vigilance of the police that every citizen was obliged to file with them the names of every invited guest. My father had complied with the request in common with the other residents of the city and was astounded at the last moment to note the appearance of the widow of Commodore Stewart, an uninvited acquaintance who had thoughtlessly brought with her two men who were conspicuous among the marked “ reds ” of Paris. Instantly, though quietly, my father notified the police, and detectives were

sent to guard the unbidden guests, without their knowledge, of course, and thus a delicate situation was safely mastered.

“ If there is to be any shooting,” said my father, “ it must not be done from my home.”

Mrs. Stewart also brought with her on that day her young grandson, Charles Stewart Parnell, then a very small boy, later destined to be lionized by the Irish people in his great fight for Home Rule for the struggling island over the sea.

In that same house, we had a taste of the loyalty of the legitimist to the White Flag of the Bourbons. On my father's birthday we always made it a practice to decorate the house with flowers, and when celebrating such a day in the Paris house my mother had the rooms filled with great bunches of white roses and heliotrope, his favorite flowers, all unconscious of the disturbance they were creating below stairs.

Finally, one of the servants came to my mother's maid with the announcement that all the servants were to quit, at once. Questioned for the reason, he replied :

“ We are well treated, we are being paid American wages, and it is hard for us to leave. But we are legitimists, and we will not remain in a house that celebrates the death of Louis XVI.”

PARIS SCENES

It took a great deal of explanation before the servants, patriotic to the core, could be made to understand that it was the birthday of my father that we were celebrating, and that we were not to be blamed because it happened to fall on the anniversary of the death of Louis XVI. Finally, however, they understood the situation and remained with us to enjoy the "American wages," a while longer.

From that Paris home, I often saw Mademoiselle De Montijo, the beautiful woman who was later the Empress Eugenie, as she rode past the place on her daily horse back rides, accompanied by a woman friend. They were perhaps the only two women who then rode horse back in Paris, as the French women of that day rode only in the country, to the hunt.

There was a riding school in Paris that offered diversion to my father, who always enjoyed a joke. Anxious for excitement, father one day called on the riding master and announced that he was ready to begin to learn the art of riding horse back. The Frenchman went through many simple strides with his new pupil, to the intense delight of my father, until one day the horse acted a bit too wildly for a novice to handle, and my father was compelled to show that he had handled the

reins before. The Frenchman was astounded:

“ You have ridden before! ” he cried, laughing at the joke upon himself. And after that, he and father enjoyed many a ride together, my father the teacher, showing how the horses were ridden when the pathway was cleared over the plains.

When the wedding of the Emperor was the sole topic of discussion in Paris, my father and mother were invited to the church ceremony at Notre Dame, a pleasure they were obliged to forego on account of the delicate health of my mother. Not caring to miss a sight of the gay procession, however, my father rented rooms in a house that stood at the head of a fork of streets, where we could have an unobstructed view of the wedding party. Mindful of his experience when the Emperor made his triumphal entry into Paris, my father invited no guests to join us on that day.

Special troops followed and preceded the carriage of the Emperor on the way to Notre Dame, Marshall Lowenstein, the same officer of Napoleon who entered Paris with the Emperor, having the position of honor, and he seemed to enjoy it.

The carriage of the Emperor led the procession, followed by the troops, the noise of

PARIS SCENES

the hoofs of the horses as they struck the cobble stones on the pavement of the narrow streets, sounding like a military wedding march, defiant, distinct, unafraid! The Emperor wore the dress of a Marshal of France, and beside him was seated his bride, in white Irish uncut velvet, with a wedding veil of English point lace. There was considerable feeling expressed among the French because the wedding finery consisted of the fabrics of Ireland and England instead of those of France, and so from her wedding morn, the ill fated woman was doomed to meet with trouble along life's rugged way.

No fairy queen could be more beautiful than was the Emperor's bride on her wedding day, and the sight of her radiantly beautiful face, the light hair and blue eyes, dispelled the murmurings of the impulsive people.

The old French State Coach of solid glass and gilt, was used for the wedding coach, drawn by eight fine bay horses, with a man at the head of each prancing steed, the animals apparently affected by the joyous strains of music which filled the air, unwilling to be held back. On the box of the coach was seated a pompous coachman, the two footmen occupying the usual place in the back.

Ah well! the beautiful empress has seen the darker side of life since that bright morn-

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

ing dawned for her in Paris, and Time has worked with a vengeance on that once exquisitely fair face! She has learned full well the sorrow of a mother's heart, and has drained the cup of tragedy to its dregs. The death of her son ended all for her! "The sun turned to darkness and the noon-tide to night." Yet, in the sorrow of a lonely old age, exiled, bereft of life's dearest ties, she is still serenely beautiful in the quiet dignity of her widowhood.

THE WINTER OF FIFTY-THREE AND 'FOUR

DURING the life of my grandfather, Washington was always considered our home, and so when we left Paris, we left it for the Capitol City, where my father rented a house adjoining that of my grandfather.

When father was on his long exploration trips, mother made it a habit to take dinner at her father's home each day, and the two houses were really the common property of both families.

My mother's young sister Susie, liked to practice on her own Erard piano, and to play on mother's Viennese Pleyel, its soft singing tones the particular delight of the young musician.

This arrangement met with my full approval and I liked to take my lessons away from the study room, and pore over them under the shadow of the piano, studying as Aunt Susie played. This gifted aunt played the music of Beethoven exceptionally well, and now in the twilight of life, a neighbor of mine plays the same beautiful music. As I

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

sit and listen to the strains wafted into my home by the friendly breezes, I dream over again the delights of a happy youth, for that music has a charm all its own for me and ever carries me back to my school-girl days on the banks of the Potomac.

My Aunt Susie later in life was Madame Boileau, and when she lived in Paris, often played at Rossini's musical Sundays—the musical event of the week. I have heard her say that when she was ready to play, Rossini would send his wife among the guests with the message:

“ Madame Boileau is going to play; those who want to talk may now leave! ”

How many music lovers in this country sigh for a similar message to be sent among the thoughtless audiences of to-day!

That same young aunt, later, was the mother of Philip Boileau of New York City, the noted painter of portraits and of idealized female heads.

But I am digressing from my story.

We brought a governess with us from France, all our lessons were given in French from French text books, and we led busy lives, we girls, regulated on the English plan of lessons and exercise.

I say “ we,” and I use the word advisedly, for my father brought up the daughter of his

THE WINTER OF FIFTY-THREE AND 'FOUR

brother, who died just before the child was born, and we two were play-mates and students together.

All my education was obtained from governesses, masters, and from home teaching, my school days being confined to six brief weeks in Paris where I studied French, and tried hard to convince the French girls of that day that I neither looked like an Indian, nor was an Indian. They finally settled the question among themselves by deciding that as I had sailed from New York to Paris I must have descended from the Dutch of New Amsterdam, though what they knew about the Dutch was a puzzle that I have never been able to solve. I was the first American girl to be enrolled in that French school, and naturally was an object of considerable curiosity.

While we lived in Washington we attended Epiphany Church, Mr. Jefferson Davis occupying the pew just back of ours. As the Davis family often brought guests to church with them, and as the dresses of the ladies took up considerably more room than they do to-day. Mr. Davis was often crowded out of his pew, and joined us in ours much to my dismay, as I was compelled to move over from the end seat, which I cherished as the "man" of the family.

The winter of 1853, when my father took

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

his last exploration party across the plains, was severely cold, even in Washington. The following spring, too, was raw and cold, and my mother felt great apprehension for his safety.

We always celebrated Easter as a church day, as well as the birthday of my brother Charles, for he was born on Easter Day.

As Easter approached, my mother begged permission to decorate the font of the church with flowers, and by dint of much persuasion her request was granted. Accordingly, when Easter morning dawned, the font was banked with dark red roses and heliotrope, their fragrance filling the church and giving the service of that day a peculiar beauty. A driving snow storm was in progress—"a pouderie," as the plainsmen and voyagers called what we now term a "blizzard"—and the effect upon the congregation, as they filed into the church from the storm and beheld the beauty and drank in the fragrance of the flowers, may better be imagined than described. It was the first time in the United States that a Protestant Church had been decorated with flowers, and the sight so appealed to Miss Gilliss, daughter of James Malvin Gilliss, United States Navy, and founder of the National Naval Observatory of Washington, that later when living in New York, she pre-



Mrs. Frémont

From a miniature painted in 1845, carried from Washington to California by Kit Carson and there delivered to Gen. Frémont

1

Mr. U

2

THE WINTER OF FIFTY-THREE AND 'FOUR

vailed upon Dr. Morgan Dix to allow old Trinity Church to be similarly decorated. Dr. Dix at first objected to the innovation, but when told that Mrs. Frémont had similarly dressed the church in Washington, he gave his consent, for while General Dix was Senator, his home was near my grandfather's, and the two families were intimate friends. Dr. Dix knew that in Senator Benton's household, things were thought out before they were acted upon, so he did not look upon the request as the mere whim of an enthusiastic girl.

Dr. Dix gave his consent merely to decorate the font, but when he reached Old Trinity that Easter morning, he found the font, lectern, altar and chancel rail a mass of flowers fairly hidden beneath beautiful white azalias, intertwined with ferns. It was too late to order any change, and perhaps Old Trinity never before looked so beautiful. So pleased were the congregation with the effect that the next Easter saw practically all the Protestant churches of New York similarly decorated.

It was early in November, 1853, while we were living beside my grandfather's home in Washington, that my father set out on a winter expedition across the continent. Efforts towards opening up the western country had already taken practical shape and the long

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

trains of emigrant wagons working along difficult and dangerous roads, were enforcing the necessity of railroads to the Pacific Coast.

While organized effort was being made to bring the railroads to the coast, the movement met with considerable opposition, and it was urged that the snows on the wide sweep of the great plains and in the Rocky Mountains would present insurmountable obstacles. The object of my father's expedition was to learn by personal observation and experience, just what the obstructions of a winter were in those regions, and how they would effect a railroad.

As my father left the Missouri frontier, there were signs of an early winter; though game was abundant on the prairie, the snow was light. There were no hardships of note until he and his party were fairly among the mountains.

My father had intended to follow across the mountains by the head waters of the Rio Grande del Norte and the Colorado Rivers, and until the party had reached the San Luis Valley and the head waters of the Del Norte, there had been sufficient game and plenty of grass for the animals.

Entering the mountain region of the Colorado water, however, the game suddenly failed and there was deep snow. They had to

THE WINTER OF FIFTY-THREE AND 'FOUR

keep to the mountains, as the valley below, though practically clear of the snow, was barren. It became difficult for the animals to find enough grass to keep up their strength and the hunters had to cover wide tracts in search of game. The rest of the party were on foot.

Gradually, the men grew weak on scanty fare and hard work, and hunger soon lengthened into actual starvation. The progress of the march was slow, and I have heard my father say that when the party issued from the mountains into the valley of the Colorado River, the broken line of half-starved men, struggling across the naked desert of the great valley, but little resembled the well equipped party of hardy men that had left the Missouri only a few short months before.

After they crossed the river at the head of one of the great canyons, they were soon involved again among the snow fields of the mountains. There remained only the bed of the Wahsatch ranges to cross, and there for the first and only time in all the travels of my father through inhospitable lands, he fell by the wayside exhausted. He was going up a mountain slope, breaking his way through the snow a little ahead of his party when without a flash of warning, his strength left him and he could not move a muscle. The moun-

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

tain grove was naked, but nearby was a thick grove of aspen and across a neighboring ravine the yellow grass peeped above the snow on a south hillside.

He decided to camp there and sat down in the snow to rest. After a few moments his strength returned, and none of the men noticed what had happened to him.

The next day the party came upon a good camping ground, and they discarded everything not absolutely necessary for the remainder of the journey. My father told the men that they were but fifty miles from the Mormon town of Parowan, situated in the great basin, and this news nerved them to greater effort and in a few days the struggling band of brave men had crossed the last ridges of the Wahsatch Mountains.

It was a narrow chance, but with the exception of one man who died from starvation just as the party left the mountains, my father brought them safely through to the end of the journey.

At the foot of the last hill they struck a wagon road leading to Parowan, and soon after came upon a camp of Utah Indians. One of the tribe knew my father and presented him with a dog. That, with some flour that the men traded from the Indians, made a welcome feast for the well nigh famished



BUFFALO ESCAPING FROM A PRAIRIE FIRE
During the days of Frémont's explorations

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

The younger members of the family kept her in close touch with the social side of life, while her father, whose confidant she always was, kept her informed as to the political events of the moment. Her life was busy and filled with her full share of its responsibilities. In midwinter, however, my mother became possessed with the conviction that my father was starving, and no amount of reasoning could calm her fears. The idea haunted her for two weeks or more and finally began to leave its physical effects upon her. She could neither eat nor sleep; open air exercise, plenty of company, the management of a household, all combined, could not wean her from the fear that my father and his men were starving in the desert.

The weight of fear was lifted from her as suddenly as it came. Her young sister Susie and a party of relatives, returned from a wedding at General Jessup's on the night of February 6, 1854, and came to mother to spend the night in order not to awaken the older members of my grandfather's family. The girls doffed their party dresses, replaced them with comfortable woolen gowns and gathered before the open fire in mother's room, were gaily relating the experiences of the evening. The fire needed replenishing and mother went to an adjoining

THE WINTER OF FIFTY-THREE AND 'FOUR

dressing room to get more wood. The old fashioned fire-place required long logs, which were too large for her to handle, and as she half knelt, balancing the long sticks of wood on her left arm, she felt a hand rest slightly on her left shoulder, and she heard my father's laughing voice whisper her name "Jessie."

There was no sound beyond the quick whispered name, no presence, only the touch, but my mother knew as people know in dreams, that my father was there, gay and happy, and intending to startle Susie, who when my mother was married, was only a child of eight, and who was always a pet playmate of my father's. Her shrill, prolonged scream was his delight and he never lost an opportunity to startle her.

Mother came back to the girls' room, but before she could speak Susie gave a great cry, fell in a heap upon the rug, and screamed again and again until mother crushed her ball dress over her head to keep the sound from the neighbors. Her cousin asked mother what she had seen and she explained that she had seen nothing, but had heard my father tell her to keep still until he could scare Susie.

Peace came to my mother instantly, and on retiring, she fell into a refreshing sleep from

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

which she did not waken until ten the next morning; all fear of the safety of father had vanished from her mind; with sleep came strength and she soon was her happy self again.

When my father returned home, we learned that it was at the time the party were starving that my mother had the premonition of evil having befallen them, and the entry in his journal showed that at exactly the moment he had written it at Parowan, my mother had felt his presence, and in that wireless message from heart to heart, knew that my father was safe and free from harm. The hour exactly tallied with the entry in his book, allowing for the difference in longitude.

The Mormons at Parowan were exceptionally kind to my father and his men that dreadful winter, even cashing father's draft for him, a courtesy never before extended to a Gentile.

Years afterwards, when we were living in Los Angeles—I think it was 1888—a floral fair was planned for San Jose. Knowing my father's aversion to public display and that he would not accept a public invitation to be feted, a committee asked him to come to the town and see the fair, and to bring my mother and myself with him. The afternoon we arrived father was met by the militia, and wel-

THE WINTER OF FIFTY-THREE AND 'FOUR

comed with the firing of guns. He was hidden beneath a bank of flowers in the carriage in which he rode and that evening amidst music and flowers he met a man who said to him:

"Colonel, you don't remember me, but I shall never forget you!"

My father asked for time to think, and after the two talked a while, my father said:

"I met you at Parowan in '54!"

The man was one of the Mormons who had befriended the party of travelers and saved them from death in that perilous journey thirty-four years before.

A little later, Kate Field, that brilliant journalist, came to Los Angeles to lecture on the Mormons—against whom she was very bitter—and she tried to prevail upon my father to introduce her at that public meeting. Finding every other excuse of no avail, my father finally said:

"I cannot do it. The Mormons saved me and mine from death by starvation in '54, and I could not introduce you."

After the death of my grandmother, who had been an invalid for years, my grandfather spent more time in St. Louis than had been his custom during her life, and, after a summer spent at Siasconset, Nantucket Island, we settled down in New York instead of returning to Washington. The slavery

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

question was beginning to divide families, although it never could turn my grandfather from his own, for his affections were too strong and his ideas of justice too plain to permit that; in fact, his loving tenderness in his family circle marked him as a very different man from "Old Bullion," of the United States Senate, as he was nick-named for joining Jackson in the fight against the United States Bank.

But with others it was different, and it became more pleasant to visit Washington than to live there, and so we took up our home in New York, where we lived through the exciting campaign of Fifty-Six.

THE CAMPAIGN OF FIFTY-SIX

AFTER we left Washington, we went to Siasconset by the Sea, where we spent the following summer. While there my father was asked to permit the use of his name for nomination as the presidential candidate on the Democratic ticket. On account of his well known aversion to slavery, it was suggested that the party platform would permit alternate states to come into the Union as slave and free states, but my father would sign no plank that did not make for absolute freedom. A cousin of ours, William Preston of Kentucky, afterwards Minister to Spain, urged my father to be the standard bearer of the Democratic party.

“Come with us; we are going to win,” he urged, but my father would not forsake principle for political honors, and he remained firm in his decision.

After my father had given his answer, he and my mother walked the bluff overlooking the ocean, discussing the matter far into the night, realizing all that it meant to them. They knew that the slavery issue would soon

divide the country, and with that great issue must come the parting of the ways for them—the severance of close family ties and friendships, for those sacred ties were severed as hearts were broken, thick and fast, during the dark days that followed, there being no compromise between North and South.

In speaking of that night in later years, I have heard my mother say that the lighthouse lighted up the bluff as they looked into the dark future, while the silvery light of the moon danced upon the ocean. “The beacon light blazed out,” said mother, “a warning to the mariners, to save them from the rocks ahead, but for us, alas! it lighted all our hopes, strewing the shore with the wreck of the loves and friendships of our past lives.”

Someone once said that my father should have been called Moses, instead of John, for like the biblical character, he was led up to the hilltop and permitted to view the promised land below, though he never was permitted to enter. He must have thought of this when he refused to lend his name for nomination as standard bearer of the Democratic party in the campaign of '56.

Returning to New York from our summer by the sea, we took a house on Second Avenue, directly opposite St. Mark's Church, later moving to West Ninth Street, and on the

THE CAMPAIGN OF FIFTY-SIX

27th of June of that year, the Republican party, in its first national convention at Philadelphia, nominated my father to head the ticket, and so began the campaign for the presidency—the first national campaign of the Republican party.

Our home at once became political headquarters, Mr. Francis Preston Blair Sr., of Washington, taking the reins in hand, determined to win the contest now opening up before us. John Bigelow, a close friend of my father's, was also active in that memorable campaign, and remained fighting for the cause until defeat was acknowledged.

That campaign was full of personalities, and my father's nature was such that he could not have withstood its bitterness. He was used to life in the open and wanted a square fight, not one filled with petty innuendoes and unfounded recriminations. So at the outset, it was agreed that he should not read his mail during the campaign, nor read the newspaper until they had been blue penciled by my mother—a promise he religiously kept during all the excitement of that year.

The seething political cauldron was steeped in malice and among other things, my father was bitterly attacked by the "Know Nothings" and arraigned as a Catholic, a charge that he never could be prevailed upon to deny.

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

"The charge is losing votes for you," he was told, and he calmly replied:

"Then I must lose them. My religion is a matter between myself and my Maker, and I will not make it a matter of politics."

As a matter of fact, my father was a life long member of the Episcopal Church, in early life trained for the ministry. It became necessary, however, that he should provide for others while still a young man, and he decided to study engineering, that profession offering good financial remuneration. His first work as a civil engineer took him through the dangerous rice swamps of South Carolina, where few white men dared to venture; so from early youth, his lines were drawn along rugged and perilous ways.

Some of the accusations made against my father in the campaign of '56 were ludicrous in the extreme, too silly for serious consideration. He was vehemently attacked for nothing more than wearing a moustache and beard; was called a French actor recently from Paris; a Catholic; a foreigner straying into our country, boldly making an attempt to take hold of the reins of government and lead it to destruction!

One of the chief reasons for the defeat of that first Republican campaign probably was the method of election in vogue at the time.

THE CAMPAIGN OF FIFTY-SIX

The state and national elections were not held in all the states on the same day, as is the custom now, the state elections in some cases being held a month or so previous to the national election. This gave the politicians an opportunity to forecast the national result, and the state elections, in consequence, were looked forward to with feverish excitement.

The result of the state election in Pennsylvania was watched anxiously by both parties, the successful party in that election being regarded as a forerunner of the winner in the national contest. When the news reached New York that Pennsylvania had gone Democratic, the hopes of the Republican party waned. Defeat seemed certain a month hence but the workers did not dream of forsaking the ship for a moment, working valiantly, hoping against hope for success.

Election day dawned, however, and with the setting sun came the verdict. The Democratic party was victorious. The words of Mr. Preston were indeed a prophecy:

“ Come with us; we are going to win! ”

My father took the defeat calmly, cheerfully bowing to the will of the majority. Mr. Blair and myself, however, did not take the loss with such good grace, and at the breakfast table the next morning, Mr. Blair broke

down, crushed with the bitterness of the defeat.

To a girl of fourteen, the result of the election was more than the loss of one great party pitted against another. My life in Washington, as a member of Senator Benton's household, had implanted in my young heart a love of political honors, and the White House loomed up as a delightful place to spend four years or more. Now with the hopes of a season or two at the White House dashed from me, I lost control of my emotions and burst into a paroxysm of tears. I refused to be comforted, and as my continued weeping began to distress my mother she told me to dress for the street and take a long walk. Still crying, I put on my coat and hat and my mother tied a thick green barege veil over my face, winding it round and round to hide my eyes, inflamed from incessant weeping, and said:

“ Now go and walk ! ”

Thus garbed, I walked Washington Square, retracing my footsteps again and again, weeping copiously the while, for my tears would not be stayed despite the vigorous walk in the brisk air of the morning. I resolutely kept at it, however, until my self control returned and I made my way back home, none too joyously perhaps, but still resigned

THE CAMPAIGN OF FIFTY-SIX

to the fact that the glamor of life in the White House was not for me to enjoy.

When I reached home, my mother talked to me on the necessity for courage with which to face the defeats of life, a heart-to-heart talk which has served me in good stead many a time and oft, when in later life, events tinged with a tragedy more poignant than defeat in a political contest, have touched me with none too gentle a hand.

The spring after the close of the campaign of '56, we sailed for Paris, partly on account of my mother's health, the strain of the exciting campaign telling upon her, and partly to say goodbye to my Aunt Susie, whose husband had been appointed French Consul to India, the family about to take up their residence in that country.

We were not long in Paris before we were recalled to the United States by the illness of my Grandfather Benton, but after remaining a while at his home in Washington, started for California, having been assured that my grandfather was on the way to recovery.

We made the trip to California by the Isthmus Route, making our home at Bear Valley, in Mariposa County, where was situated the mining estate of my father. We had scarcely reached the town, however, when the news of the death of my grandfather came

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

to us, and we then learned that through his desire to save my mother all unnecessary anxiety, he had forbidden his physician to make known to her the dangerous nature of his illness.

The days were filled with sorrow at the thought of the broken home in far away Washington, the death of my grandfather being deeply felt by my mother, who had been his companion and confidant throughout all her life. But life in the new country was too earnest to permit of useless repining, and we gradually adjusted ourselves to its circumstances, though we no longer looked upon Washington as home.

BEAR VALLEY

OUR cottage was near the tiny mining village of Bear Valley, named as was the range to the south of it, from the grizzlies that made the place their rendezvous. The bears often came to feast at the hog ranch not far from the enclosed patch of twelve acres that made a park-like pasture around our cottage. The big white oaks and bunches of undergrowth near by lent their beauty to the scene, and the whitewashed cottage, with its plank walls, papered over cotton, was quite a pretentious home in those days, and in that country. The French wall paper purchased by my mother in the village of Mariposa thirteen miles away, was quite artistic, and when we added two fine brick chimneys to the place, we felt that we had a real home in the wilderness.

The heat of the summer was hard to bear, and neither meat or vegetables could be had when we first made the place our home, canned food and rice being our principal diet. We had with us a maid whom we loved to call

our "Irish Rose," and a French woman who was an excellent cook.

Soon after we settled in Bear Valley, an Italian began to raise fresh vegetables. My father gave the gardener the waste water from the steam quartz mill, and we always had a bountiful supply of good things to eat, after the first crop had been gathered in that Italian garden. My own poultry yard not only afforded me an endless amount of pleasure, but also enabled me to keep the family well supplied with chickens, turkeys and ducks, so that, although we were on the fringe of civilization, we illustrated the fact that "where there is a will, there is a way."

When we came to Bear Valley, we were warned by the settlers in the vicinity that between the Indians, the Mexicans and the Chinese of the neighborhood, everything movable would be stolen from us, but though plenty of petty thieving went on in the neighborhood, we never suffered from it in the least degree. The Indian women helped with the laundry work in our family, and would not carry away even a discarded tin can without asking permission to take it—the Indians using the cans for sauce pans in their crude attempts at housekeeping.

The friendliest relations always existed between the Indians and our family, my father



The Frémont Cottage in Bear Valley in 1858

11

Mr. O



BEAR VALLEY

permitting no one to disturb them in their ranches or at their springs. The Indian women had made seats for themselves under the shade of the big pine tree that stood between our cottage and the kitchen—the latter a separate building—and there the squaws were wont to gather at the close of day, or to rest from their berry- or fagot-gathering at noontide. Their favorite lunch consisted of a sandwich made of bread, suet and turnip peelings, and we always made it a point to have a supply of these dainties ready for them.

One day the squaws were returning from the fields, when my mother noticed that their baskets were filled with a mixture of mushrooms and toadstools. By means of a sign language and a few Mexican words, mother explained to the women that the toadstools would kill them, and in order to illustrate this to them, she put some of the toadstools in a sauce pan, cooked them and dropped in a piece of silver, to show them how the poisonous mass blackened the bright silver. The squaws watched the process with much interest, and then the spokeswoman of the party replied:

“ Kill white woman; not kill Indian,” and taking a liberal portion of the toadstools, smiled and said:

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

“ Come to-morrow! ”

The woman did come “ to-morrow,” the toadstools apparently having not the slightest effect upon her.

Coming almost direct to Bear Valley from Paris, we had a bountiful supply of dainty muslins, and it was the delight of the Indian women to gaze upon the bits of feminine finery. Years after, when we said goodbye to the place, the same groups of women surrounded our cottage, sincerely sorry to see us go, their lamentations mingled with the oft repeated words:

“ Good women! ”

Nowhere else did the wild flowers ever seem so beautiful as at Bear Valley, and I rode afar into the mountains in search of them. The Indian men often brought me long withes wound round with flowers, from places inaccessible to me, and the white men of the neighborhood were astounded at this attention of the Indians to a mere girl.

My father's life at Bear Valley was filled with business cares, in connection with the development of the mining estate. For me, the life was filled with pleasure, for it was my first taste of country life, and I was young enough to enjoy its novelty. The estate came into our possession in rather a novel manner. My father had left a friend money with

BEAR VALLEY

which to buy a Mission farm that he knew would soon be for sale, and the friend did buy the farm, but he bought it for himself. The Mariposa was then a cattle range of forty-three thousand acres, apparently of little value, and the friend bought this for father, the native Californian owner being glad to get rid of it. In earlier days, my father had fought bands of horse thieves on the same range, years before gold was dreamed of in California.

At Bear Valley, my mother was like an exile, for she was not interested in mines, horses or chickens, but she cheerfully made the best of conditions and never complained. The horses entered into the daily lives of my father and myself, and I rode with him to the mines and mills, though from a persistent fear of the tunnels, I never entered any of the mines. I often watched the liquid gold run from the retorts into the moulds, and admired the beauty of the colors, looking for all the world like a drift-wood fire.

Our rides ranged from the mills, on the banks of the Merced River, the dam requiring thousands of trees, to the Guadalupe Mine at the far diagonal line of the forty-three thousand acre estate.

At one time, the Guadalupe Mine was

held by a party of Frenchmen—squatters, as we called them—and my father was compelled to resort to legal measures to induce them to surrender. A writ of eviction had been issued and given to the sheriff to serve, that official declining to act.

“ The election will be held in a few days,” he told my father, “ and if I serve the writ I will lose.”

So, taking the bull by the horns, my father served it himself, with the aid of a local lawyer. As father rode away to serve the writ, the mill blacksmith came into the cottage and asked for a mule and my father’s Derringers.

“ I am told there will be shooting when the Colonel attempts to serve the writ,” he said, “ and I know he is not armed.”

I gave the blacksmith the best mule on the place and the necessary ammunition, and sent him hurrying after my father. There was no shooting, however, and so diplomatically had my father arranged the matter that the squatters invited him to remain to lunch, which he did. My father effected a sort of compromise with the men, willing to grant them every privilege and courtesy, and only anxious to protect his own rights. When he left the mine, he was invited to bring the family to lunch with the squatters, the host adding:

BEAR VALLEY

“ Be sure and bring the little boys who can speak French.”

We accepted the invitation a few weeks later, and dined sumptuously on sweet omelette, eggs not being common in that part of the country and considered a luxurious feast, the lunch topped off with good French coffee, as only the French know how to make it.

“ Ayah,” a mountain bred horse and a pale dapper cream colored beauty with silver mane and tail, showing an Arab strain, were my favorite horses. To the latter I had given the name “ Chiquita ” (dear little one), a name perfectly suited to her.

A cattle ranger told us that he had a horse that surpassed all others, and he was going to present it to me, as it was gay and spirited and just the horse for a young girl to ride through the mountains. We were seated on the porch one evening when the ranger rode up with his horse. Mother and I exchanged glances, and almost simultaneously, we named it “ Becky Sharp.”

Succeeding events proved that we named the animal well, for like the original Becky, she had good qualities deeply buried, and cleverness. She was an alert cow pony, and once treated me to an exciting adventure, when she ran away. Bucking three times, in the good old fashion, with her head down,

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

her back raised like an angry cat, her feet gathered together, she went up in the air and came down with her head where her tail had been. After this vigorous exercise, Becky stopped to breathe. I seized the opportunity and jumped off; she had hunched the saddle onto her neck. She would not allow a crupper and I was two miles from home and I could not get the saddle on her again for she was a mistress in the art of inflation when cinching was attempted.

While in this predicament two teams approached, driven by men with whom our family did not pass the time of day. They were bringing the wagon loads of ore to the mill from the mine their company had "jumped" on my father's estate. I knew they were Americans, and that they would be nice to a girl who needed help—so I walked to meet them, leading Becky.

"That is an ornary brute," one of the men declared as he proceeded to cinch her so tight that I finally cried for mercy.

After I had mounted her, he said:

"Run her until she begs off, and after you get her home never ride her again. If you do, I'll tell the Colonel!"

I never did ride Becky again and a few days later she was permitted to take her own



Miss Frémont and "Chiquita"



8701

BEAR VALLEY

way to her home ranch, the grass being good at that time of the year.

The "jumping" of mines was a serious matter in California during our residence there, and was often the cause of bloodshed. A law had been passed making it legal to "jump" a mine if it was found empty. My father lost the Black Drift Mine under this law, the guard left at the mine having been bribed to leave it long enough for another to take possession.

An attempt was made to take the Pine Tree Mine, not by bribing the men in charge, for those men were not of the calibre that could be bribed, but by starving the men into abandoning it. The invaders thought the property was unguarded, but far back in the mine there were five men at work under the mining captain Ketton, when a band of men demanded the surrender of the property. Our men refused to leave the mine, and the attacking party settled at its mouth, determined to starve the men into submission. Within a few hours, one hundred men were camped on the hill slope, refusing to allow anyone to enter the mine, and against this band my father had but twenty-seven men to defend his property. The siege began in earnest, and our imprisoned men had plenty of fresh air, which

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

came from an abandoned shaft. They had water also, but no food, and none of my father's men were permitted to go near the mine, much less send in supplies for the miners.

The entrance to the Pine Tree Mine was near the top of a mountain, rising sharply above it, and descending below into a winding canyon known as "Hell's Hollow," on account of the numerous accidents to man and beast in going over its rough trail. On the road a broad space was leveled at the mouth of the mine leading to the mill, and on this broad space the enemy camped. They were relieved every few hours by other men, and their provisions were brought to them through "Hell's Hollow." My father stationed men at the entrance of this canyon who examined each load, permitting all provisions to pass, but destroying all liquor. His one thought was to keep the enemy sober, and thus have a better chance to avoid bloodshed during the siege.

Two great problems confronted my father, how to get word to the Governor of California at Sacramento, and how to get food to his imprisoned men in the mine. The latter question was finally solved by the plucky Mrs. Ketton, a slim dark-haired young woman from the mountains of Virginia.

BEAR VALLEY

When the supper hour arrived the first night of the siege, Mrs. Ketton filled a market basket with food for the five men, walking by the guards at the entrance of the mine, as no man dared do, for the guns of the besiegers loomed up threateningly.

"No food allowed; you cannot enter," the guards told the little woman.

"I am going to enter," calmly replied the wife of the mine's captain, "and so is this food going into the mine. Not even the Colonel could stop me from bringing food to my man."

"We will shoot you if you try it," replied the guards.

"Shoot away," responded Mrs. Ketton. "It's a pretty name you'll leave behind you—shooting a woman for carrying supper to her husband."

With this retort, the little woman marched fearlessly by them and into the mine. That problem was solved, and twice a day during the five long days of the siege, she carried the food in to the men, a layer of powder and balls at the bottom of the basket, for fear that her husband might need protection.

After the storm was over, Mrs. Ketton said to my mother:

"How I should have liked to have worn

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

your French dresses into the mine. I could have carried revolvers in to the men."

Crinoline was in vogue then and the French dresses would probably have concealed more ammunition than could be carried beneath the narrow skirted calico of the dress worn by Mrs. Ketton.

Several times my father was afraid that the enemy would fire on the plucky little woman, and perhaps the thought that they would be dead men before the sound of their guns died away in the hills, helped to stay their hands, as well as their unwillingness to shoot a woman.

The mails were too slow in those days for messages of importance, and the telegraph was only a dream of the future. My father wanted to hurry an express messenger to the governor of the state, but every pass leading southward from the valley into Sacramento was picketed with armed men.

A young Englishman who was visiting our family offered to go by the northward route and start an express to the governor, but my father would not consent to it, as the youth was sent to us to recuperate after years of overstudy in London. Ostensibly I gave in to my father's wishes in the matter, but when father returned to the mine, where he spent each night watching his men

BRAB VALLEY

and his property, I started the young Englishman north over Mt. Bullion and into Lyon's Gulch, a rough valley that led along the River Merced. Mounted on my horse, "Ayah," he started northward, star-guided along the way, until he reached Coulterville, a law-abiding town, where he obtained a messenger to go to Governor Downey at Sacramento, acquaint him with conditions at The Mariposa estate, and solicit help for my father in protecting his property.

The governor immediately sent his own messenger post haste to the scene of the trouble, informing the men that they did not have even the shadow of the law in their favor in thus attempting to force a man to abandon his property in order that they might "jump" it, and commanding them to disband forthwith, or the militia would be called to the mines.

The men obeyed and the siege of the Pine Tree Mine was at an end after five days of tense anxiety that were especially hard on my mother, who feared for the safety of my father as well as for his men.

During the siege, my father made speeches to the men, urging them to disband, and a New York business man who happened to be in the country at the time, told my mother

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

that during one of those speeches he counted eleven rifles leveled at my father. As mother flinched at the news, the New Yorker added:

“ But as many of the Colonel's men had ‘ drawn a bead ’ upon the enemy.”

The mines were some miles away from our cottage, and father rode alone during those perilous days, riding his favorite horse, “ Jim,” a fine Californian that answered the Mohammedan description of the original horse:

“ Condensed by Allah from the southwest wind, a red sorrel with a white star on its forehead, and a long mane and tail.”

From a window that commanded a view of the road as it turned the hillside, my mother watched for my father during the siege of the Pine Tree Mine. She watched to see if father was in the saddle, or if “ Jim ” was being led, riderless. Finally, the strain became so great that she relinquished her seat at the window, and calling to me, said:

“ I don't believe I can see clearly. You watch for your father.”

The women at our cottage had to bear their full share of the trouble at the mine, my father remaining so much of the time with his men, until finally the enemy thought they could induce him to surrender by making

BEAR VALLEY

threats upon us. So in due time, a written notice was served upon us, in which we were told that the men were "bound to have their rights," and while they did not want to make war upon defenseless women and children, they would give us twenty-four hours to pack up and leave. Otherwise, they would burn the house over our heads and then the Colonel would be killed.

My father was at the mines when this notice was served upon us, and without consulting anyone, mother told Isaac, our Tennessee mountain driver and hunter, that she wanted to drive to the village, explaining the reason.

Wearing our prettiest Paris muslins, touched off with plenty of ribbons, we started out, stopping at the Bear Valley Village Inn, where my mother showed the notice to the landlord. She asked him to tell the writers of that message that the house and land was ours, and that we intended to remain upon it. "If the house is burned," she said, "we will camp on the land, and if the men kill the Colonel as threatened, then we will sell the property to a corporation that is anxious to buy it, and the property will come under the control of men who will be much harder to deal with than Colonel Frémont." After delivering her ultimatum, forgetful for the

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

moment of where she was, she turned to Isaac, and gave him the city formula:

“ Home, Isaac! ”

Home, amid such turmoil!

Isaac patrolled the grounds every night, but despite all the vigilance, bombs of powder in tin cans awakened us a few nights later, as they burst near our home. Mother offered to get shelter in the village for our women but neither of them would leave us. The Irish girl would not think of abandoning us in our hour of trouble, and Mémé, the French girl, said it reminded her of the three July days in Paris in '48, when she had taken her turn at building barricades, and liked it.

After the trouble was settled, a committee of women living in Mariposa and on the plains beyond, came riding in to see mother, to thank her for having remained throughout the disturbance.

“ Had you given up and left the cottage,” they said, “ our hills would have run blood.”

The women were picturesque in their blue merino dresses, wide knitted collars, hats loaded down with flowers and ribbons, their hoop skirts lifted up over the pommels. They had to ride to our home and yet wanted to enter the cottage dressed in their “ Sunday best,” rather than in their riding habits.

BEAR VALLEY

The last straw of the anxiety of those days was laid upon mother, when one of my small brothers cut his knee to the tendons while playing with a hatchet. It was thirteen miles to Mariposa, where there lived an excellent surgeon—excellent when sober, but just then he was on one of his prolonged sprees—and Stockton, the home of the next nearest doctor, was eighty-four miles away. A German chemist working on the estate (whose experience in surgery had been gained in Heidelberg duels) took care of the lad and prevented the knee from stiffening.

As things quieted down in the valley, my father took mother to San Francisco and when they returned to Bear Valley, we all prepared for a trip to the Yosemite.

1894

Mr. U

YOSEMITE AND MOUNT BULLION

JUST as we were leaving the cottage for Yosemite, a group of lawyers arrived to try a suit in the Mariposa Court, a suit in which my father was interested, for though he had bought and paid for his property and held the patents thereto, he was constantly called upon to defend it.

So mother was obliged to remain at home while we started out for the Yosemite. Our party consisted of myself, a cousin, a friend from New York and her brother, and the three men who accompanied us. We took the Coulterville trail, the Mariposa trail being too snow bound, even though it was then late in May. We rode our own horses, passed and explored a beautiful cave, where a flat-bottom boat lay afloat on its deep blue water, and as the road rose into the mountains, we saw long stretches of white azalias in bloom. We camped at night.

The snow was very deep and had we not caught up with a dweller in the valley who was returning with his provision-laden pack mules, we would have been forced to return.

We forded the two Cascade Creeks, descended the mountain into the valley, and camped on the bank of the River Merced, at the foot of El Capitan. The animals were too hot and tired to swim across the icy current until the next morning, when our saddles and small baggage were taken across with us in a little dug-out. The land for some distance beyond the river was still too marshy to be ridden over, without miring the horses, so we made our way to the "Two Transparencies" that served as hotels, walking along the base of the mountain.

Our guide, who crossed the river the night previously, foreseeing a big rain, told the men in the valley that three women were coming, and when we arrived we found that the men had erected a cabin of hand-cut planks and shingles—the first house made of lumber to be erected in the Yosemite. The cabin was about ten feet square, the floor and door of solid plank. We were tired and slept throughout the night, unheeding the patter of the raindrops as they fell on the first roof in the Yosemite Valley. The men of the party took turns at watching our little cabin, which looked at times as though it would float away into the river on whose banks it was built.

The canvas roofs of the log hut hotels of the valley leaked and we kept out of them

YOSEMITE AND MOUNT BULLION

during the frequent showers. The hunters shared their venison and road runners with us, birds common in the far west, so named because they preferred running to flying, and the Indians speared river trout for us. We traveled many miles on foot, the trails buried under water after the heavy rain falls of the early spring.

We crossed a marshy meadow to Mirror Lake, the men carrying planks and spreading them before us.

The Yosemite was perfect in its majestic greatness. The heavy rains of the winter rendered the falls even more beautiful than usual, the Bridal Veil being of fairy-like beauty. The Nevada Falls were beautiful too, the lake had a charm that abides with me still, but the mountains appealed to me still more. The river and its rapids were bordered with wild dogwood just beginning to bloom, while a myriad of tiny flowers starred the meadow along the way.

The trip to the Yosemite contrasts strangely with a trip through the same valley to-day. No women are now allowed to ride side saddles, they must wear divided skirts and ride valley-trained horses on account of the attending dangers. In view of all this, I like to record that we three women of the merry party of the long ago, rode our

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

usual home horses, used side saddles and wore the regulation riding habits. The latter we wore whether riding or climbing and we made the trip with ease and comfort, though the roads were unusually rough and fatiguing. We left the valley with our animals in good condition, though we often rode through water to our saddle girths, the stones underneath loose and rolling and especially dangerous to the horses.

When we returned to Bear Valley, we found that the lawyers had transferred the suit to San Francisco, so mother was left alone while father went with them.

We wanted to make up to mother for her disappointment in not making the trip to the Yosemite, and so we started out to see the Mariposa Big Trees, then known as "Clark's Grove." The trip was easy, made part way in carriages and part way on horse back in side saddles, and the first night out we spent in a long shed-like cottage, outside which were the stumps of three great oak trees, over which were stretched great feather beds. At the edge of the stumps there grew three little locust trees, and when we expressed our amazement that three such trees as the oaks should have been cut down, the mistress of the cottage remarked:

YOSEMITE AND MOUNT BULLION

“ I’d rather have locusts any day, even if they be little.”

Our ride up to the Grove was over a pine-needle covered trail, through a flower scented forest of trees near the Sequoias. The trees would be considered big elsewhere, but there in close proximity to the largest trees in the world, they were little noticed.

We made our camp in the grove near Clark’s cabin, on the banks of the Merced River. While we had heard about the great trees, as we rode among them we realized that we had no conception of their majestic grandeur until we had seen them, as indeed no one can appreciate them without seeing them in their glory.

Clark guided us through the grove, delighted with our awe and admiration of them, for Galen Clark, the keeper of the grove, was also the discoverer of the trees and died among them only a few short years ago.

Part of the grove had been accidentally burned and after our ride through it, we reached camp black as the actors in any minstrel show could ever hope to be; so we decided on a bath in the Merced, its glacier-like waters eliciting many a piercing scream at the first plunge.

That night our camp mattresses were made of a thick pile of soft hemlock twigs, a deep

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

layer of hay spread over the twigs, and blankets stretched upon them. At the suggestion of Mr. Clark, we set fire to a fallen pine tree, to make a night lamp for the ladies, as Clark gaily put it, and the great tree burned until morning dawned.

Our New York friend said it was too beautiful to sleep, and as she had a well-trained voice, she entertained us with strains from the operas mother most liked, the rest of the party joining in the choruses.

Very many years after, when Galen Clark was in his extreme old age—he lived to be more than ninety-six—he was passing through Los Angeles and called to see my mother, telling her that that musical night was among his most cherished memories of his life in the Mariposas.

We returned to Bear Valley after our tour of the grove, our New York friend going back East taking my cousin with her as far as New Orleans, where the latter married.

It grew so hot in Bear Valley that it became all but impossible to stay there, so my father took us up on the Mt. Bullion range (the range named for my grandfather), more than three thousand feet above where our little cottage was situated in the valley. The spot offered a beautiful site for a camp,

YOSEMITE AND MOUNT BULLION

a short mesa that lay just below the crest and faced northward, commanding a view of a small forest of sturdy oak trees, State Oaks, as they were called in memory of the homes left behind. For in those days of no railroads, no telegraphs, and with automobiles an unheard of possibility, those homes seemed very far indeed.

There were two fine springs near our summer camp, one of them always ice cold; and near the larger one was a bowl shaped hollow that sheltered our camp fire and made a most convenient kitchen. Near this we ran up a pretty little *ramada*, the posts cut in rustic fashion, from some of the small trees nearby. The place was thatched with branches, mostly from the bay trees in the gullies, fragrant and making a delightful shade. This made our dining room and the view from it was entrancing in its beauty—thirty miles as the crow flies, across dovetailing mountains, much lower than the one upon which we camped.

From the base of the mountain, we caught occasional glimpses of the Merced River, winding its way through to the plains from the Yosemite Valley, whence it escaped through the great cleft at the edge of which El Capitan stands sentinel. In that clear

air, it seemed much nearer than thirty miles, and now and then we could almost hear the murmur of its water.

The birds were plentiful, and so tame that they came close to our group, and seemed to inspect us with a critical eye. There were some rare wood-peckers, and they were wont to sit on the twigs of our rustic posts and watch us eat, only flying to a safe distance when one of us arose. The quail were thick on the mountain, and some of the mother birds brought their young right into our kitchen to gather up the grain and rice that we scattered there daily for them.

My father would allow no shooting near the camp and the birds seemed to decide that we did not belong to the usual variety of mankind, and were exceedingly friendly with us. Their cheery, bright presence added much to the pleasure of camp life and brought to it more than a touch of natural beauty.

Our tents were strongly built with the sides rigged up, awning fashion, the plank floors covered with matting, and a dressing room arranged near one of the springs. The heavy things were taken up to the camp in a light wagon drawn by oxen, and the trip up the mountain was covered with compara-

YOSEMITE AND MOUNT BULLION

tive ease by making a long detour and then following along the crest, through the open park like growth of trees.

All other communication with the valley below was made on foot or on horse or mule back, along a faint trail which led right up and down the mountain side. My mother, who never liked riding even on a level road, made only the one trip up and down, content to remain at the camp until we bade it our last goodbye. My father, however, rode down to the mines and mills almost every morning, coming back after the extreme heat of the day was spent.

I often made the trip riding my horse Ayah, a sure-footed and always willing carrier, bringing up fresh supplies and taking packages down to the laundry, for we had left our valley house in commission. I remember one load that I carried up that steep mountain side, that gave some trouble both to Ayah and to me, for it contained besides two puppy dogs, a roll of laundry, some special groceries, a lot of mail and a teapot, this last swung to the outer pommel.

The mail was unusually heavy that day. The steamers only came in about every two weeks, and besides our home letters, this time it brought some of the best new books,

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

a package of Eastern papers and a long bar of white nougat—the reminders of a persistently good friend in San Francisco.

The most troublesome part of that load was the two frisky young puppies, which were to serve the double purpose of playmates to my two small brothers, and relieve Bronte our house dog of the care of some of her too numerous family. The puppies were curious as to the contents of my various assortment of packages, and several times nearly landed them on the ground. Ayah and myself were glad enough to be safe on the top at last, and turn the squirming pets over to the boys.

There were daily lessons for the boys, in the way of stories read or told, and a hunting trip with Isaac, a fine hunter himself—indeed, a better hunter than he was a cook, though he tried to combine both attributes at our summer camp.

Isaac was a good drill master and both boys became experts, gaining a knowledge of sighting, allowing for wind, etc., which was extremely useful to them later in life, in connection with the handling of guns.

My mother gave me lessons in history and poetry, as well as reading—a necessary accomplishment of those days—and though I

YOSEMITE AND MOUNT BULLION

made some progress in those studies, I must confess that I spent more time exploring along the crest of the mountain and into its deep ravines. My Ayah was mountain bred and almost as good as a goat for winding his way safely among the hills, and together we left no spot of the neighborhood unexplored.

There was none of the regulation house-keeping in the camp and we brought up one of the maids, leaving the other below in the valley in charge of the house there, the maids alternating for the rest and recreation afforded by our life in the mountain.

We were never left alone, for besides Isaac—hunter and cook—there was a man for the horses and mules, and Mr. Biddle Boggs, a Pennsylvanian who was connected with the neighboring mills—a pleasant as well as brave man, well accustomed to life on the mountainside. Now and then my father spared a whole day from his mills and mines to enjoy with us the exhilarating mountain air, to ride with my mother and myself, and to view special points of interest which I had discovered in my daily rides.

One of these scenes was especially beautiful, giving us a mountain view of the long stretch of ever higher mountains, past the

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

cleft and into the Yosemite, where El Capitan stood always on guard, and on beyond into Nevada, where Carson's Peak brought an end to the vista.

By merely facing around on the rock, we looked down below on the valley, with our own little home cottage snugly nestled there among the trees. Another view brought the small village and one of the quartz mills before our eyes across Mt. Oso, where that range dwindled abruptly down into small hillocks, and merged into the great plain that stretched far away to the timber line of the big San Joaquin River.

Five silver ribbon-like rivers, our own Merced among them, flowed down into the San Joaquin, beyond which rose the Contra Costa Mountains, surely a glorious view, extending nearly one hundred and fifty miles—from Carson's Peak to Contra Costa!

We had planned to stay in camp for some months leading a very simple life, our only visitors groups of Indian women filling their big conical baskets with the service berries of the mountain side—much like the whortle berries of the East.

These women often stopped to rest and drink at the springs surrounding our camp and were always made welcome. We talked

YOSEMITE AND MOUNT BULLION

with them by means of signs and with the aid of a limited vocabulary of Spanish, and grew to understand one another fairly well. Woman-like, they were always interested in our clothes, and were not averse to inspecting our garments critically.

Our plans for a long camp life on the mountain were not carried out, however, for after we had been there but a few weeks, one of the Indians with whom we were on friendly terms—he was the head man of the chief ranch of our valley—came into our camp with a warning which we heeded.

He would not deign to talk to women, but he told Mr. Boggs that his tribe and another tribe at the north of us were quarreling and that the running fight would lead them alongside our camp. As he had not braves enough to guaranty our safety, he advised Mr. Boggs to “get the Colonel’s women” down to their home in the valley post haste.

Instantly we were making a hurried departure, leaving our provisions for the friendly Indian and his party, in thankfulness for his warning.

We mounted our mules and horses, and taking with us only such things as could be hastily strapped on the pack animals, descended into the valley, spending the night in

our home there—called the “ White House ” by the Mexicans and Indians.

There was no irony in the term the natives had given our valley home, for they had no knowledge of the other White House on the banks of the Potomac, where only a few brief years before, it had seemed not impossible that our home might be cast for a while.

We sent a message to prevent my father returning to the camp, and some days later, the oxen went up and brought down what we had been obliged to leave in our hurried departure. The Indians had left most of the things undisturbed, as they were intent on fighting, not on pillage.

Some were killed on each side in the drawn battle, in which the whites took little interest, as it was merely a “ family quarrel ” among the Indians, and settled in the usual Indian fashion. We were relieved to know that the friendly Indian who had warned us of our danger was not hurt, though he was in the thick of the fight—avenging the honor of his tribe!

We found the heat at Bear Valley unbearable, so hot indeed that we often roasted eggs in the hot dust of the carriage drive, the roasting process being completed within eighteen minutes! We made leather shoes for the dogs to keep their feet from blistering, the

YOSEMITE AND MOUNT BULLION

dogs coming to us each morning to put on the shoes and in the evening to remove them.

We soon moved to San Francisco, my father returning to Bear Valley whenever it became necessary to look after his interests.

BLACK POINT AND WAR DAYS

WE always made the journey between Bear Valley and San Francisco in our light carriage drawn by sturdy bays, and at one time made the eighty miles to Stockton in one day, though the first fourteen miles were over a very rough mountain road, using the Stockton River steamboat to reach San Francisco.

We liked to break the journey, however, and when time permitted we preferred the longer route through the San Joaquin Plains, by way of Livermore's Pass and into San Francisco by the Oakland ferry.

These trips were filled with interest especially in the spring and fall, when the wild geese were migrating. We kept as far away from their camp as possible in order not to disturb them, though we delighted in watching the "officers" and "privates" in separate groups, preparing to break camp. Led by the "officers," the geese rose high in the air, where they fell into formation and started out on their long flight.

The plains were then uncultivated and

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

we drove past long stretches of wild flowers, each variety flourishing in its own particular field. The *nemophila* (baby blue eyes) almost covered the plains in some parts of that country, so that we seemed to drive over a sea of blue beneath a sky of lighter hue bending above us.

We took the Stockton steamboat to San Francisco in '59, and after we arrived there we spent some little time in the pleasurable pursuit of house hunting. My father eventually found a place which proved to be a case of love at first sight with my mother—a tiny cottage built on the edge of the bluff, on a small point projecting out into the Bay, just across the channel from Alcatraz Island. The fort was so close to the cottage that when the men were ready to fire their Columbiads, they signalled us to open the windows to prevent the bursting of the panes.

My father bought twelve acres with a city title from a banker in San Francisco, and we settled upon the place as home, for now that my Grandfather Benton was no more, my mother had no desire to return East.

We improved the place with walks, drives and stables, and the growth of small trees rising from the bay and into the sandhills gave it its name of "Black Point." The flowers were beautiful, particularly the roses

BLACK POINT AND WAR DAYS

and fuchsias, and we all loved the spot. Mr. Starr King, who was beloved and honored in California, for it was felt that he had saved the state to the Union, was our friend and frequent visitor. He named our home "The Porter's Lodge," for the magnificent view it commanded of Golden Gate, which my father had named before the days of gold, the name suggested to him by the golden sunsets, as well as in anticipation of the commerce that he felt certain would some day come to it from the Orient—a dream long since realized.

There were several cottages on the Point, each having groups of children, so our boys had plenty of playmates and one of the girls of a neighboring cottage was my particular chum. Though long years have intervened and though this friend of my girlhood is now living with her husband and children on another arm of the sea (at Tacoma, on Puget Sound) she is still my dear friend.

While we lived at "Black Point," Bret Harte was a constant visitor at our home. He was brilliantly clever and intensely shy, we were told by a mutual friend, before the genius was ever invited to our home, and later we felt that the description suited him to a dot. As he grew better acquainted, however, he was wont to bring his manuscripts

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

to the cottage and go over them with mother, who took a real interest in his work. In those days Bret Harte was a contributor to a literary publication of San Francisco, known as the "Golden Era," and while he flinched under criticism, he always welcomed the comment of my mother, who was likewise ever ready with liberally given and sincerely felt praise of his work. While he was still a struggling young writer, mother obtained for him a place in the surveyor general's office, where he was free to write, and later she secured other positions for him, when the change of officials made it necessary for him to seek other employment. Afterwards when we were living in New York, Bret Harte wrote to mother and told her that he was not at all afraid of the future and felt none of its financial cares. "For," he added, "were I to find myself wrecked on a desert island I am sure that a native would approach me with a three cornered note from Mrs. Frémont, telling me that I had been made Governor of the Island at two thousand dollars per year."

One of the incidents of our life at this time was the inauguration of the Pony Express. The mail, always an important factor when one is so far from home, reached us once a month by steamer during our early



John C. Frémont

John C. Frémont

After a photograph taken in June, 1890, a few weeks before his death

761



BLACK POINT AND WAR DAYS

California days. Later, the overland stage was a great improvement and was looked upon as quite modern—coming in even severe weather, with wonderful regularity. The Pony Express was the culmination of rapidity, carrying only letter mail, at advanced charges. We chanced to have gone in to San Francisco for our mail on the day when the first Pony Express arrived. The street had been cleared for the arrival and the sidewalks were packed with onlookers. We were asked to drive on, when a voice from the crowd called out, "Let Mrs. Frémont's carriage stay, for the Colonel blazed that path long before the day of the pony rider." So we remained until welcomed by cheering all down the street, the first Pony Express galloped up, and in the quick distribution our letters were handed to us. It was near this very spot that we were landed through the surf upon our first arrival in California.

The rumbling of war changed the tone of our life at Black Point, and on April 13, 1861, while we were discussing the possibility of war, the gun fired on Fort Sumter was echoing throughout the East.

My father was in London on business connected with the Mariposas, so it was left to mother to prepare to start east. In the midst of her plans she was seriously injured when

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

our horses ran away on Russian Hill, the steepest hill in San Francisco, and it was weeks before she could leave.

At the first opportunity, she rented our home at Black Point and we left the coast. When we crossed the bar and I could no longer see our home I went below and stayed for some days—supposed to be sea sick, but only heart sick. Perhaps it was my Scotch intuition that so overwhelmed me with the feeling that I was losing my home.

The steamer on which we sailed carried all the soldiers that could be gathered on such short notice, plenty of ammunition, a number of officers and three millions in treasure. The journey down the Pacific was without adventure and we crossed the Isthmus swiftly, this time by rail. After we left Aspinwall, now Colon, all this was changed and we learned that the steamer was in danger of being captured by a Southern privateer.

An extra lookout was stationed, and not a light was allowed on board, though the men begged for one so that they might play cards. The women were anxious for just a ray, even enough to permit them to care for the children on board, but the captain was resolute and only a faint glimmer flickered in the engine room until we reached Sandy Hook.

BLACK POINT AND WAR DAYS

As evening came on during that journey the passengers gathered together in groups outside their respective cabins, so that they would be able to enter their own quarters in the gathering gloom. An anxious crowd was on board that steamer, but the officers and men were cheerful and made every effort to quiet the fears of the passengers.

I remember one of the younger officers constantly whistled "Dixie."

"It is a good marching tune," he said. "I know that I cannot even think of it on shore, so I am going to whistle it to my heart's content on the sea!"

When the steamer was well out at sea, the captain took my mother and a merchant who was on board into his confidence and told them that he was going to take the ship out of the usual course, so that it would not be possible to stop for the mail, in which both my mother and the merchant were interested; my mother for news of father who might be in the field, and the merchant for news of his ships, that might have been taken captive.

"My sympathy is with the South," said the captain, "but I promised the Vanderbilts that I would take their ship safely back to them and then resign and go to North Carolina, and I mean to keep my word."

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

He explained that the Sumter would be apt to lie in wait off a small island in the West Indies, where the steamer usually stopped for the mail, and that his ship could be easily taken as it had no means of resisting. So the steamer followed the route through the Caicos passage, a route only used by fruit schooners. While this plan meant that there would be no news until the steamer reached port, both my mother and the merchant heartily agreed with the plans of the captain, and there was no sign of trouble until as we were off the Carolinas the cry, "A sail," aroused the passengers.

In the distance we saw a long low ship, with every sail set, swiftly following our tracks. Our steamer was not a racer by any means and the fleet little ship trying to overtake us was the dreaded Jeff Davis, which had been the swiftest slaver afloat. The wind was fair and the enemy was gaining on us, while the captain made herculean efforts to push our steamer on to safety. Officers were placed in charge of the troops and treasure, and the captain told the commanding officer that he would get the steamer away if possible.

"Make it possible," replied the officer.
"Neither the men nor the treasure on board

BLACK POINT AND WAR DAYS

are going to be taken. You save the steamer or I will sink her! ”

Men were posted by the magazine, while others were grouped around the engine to see that all speed safely possible was made. The two shots fired by the Jeff Davis fortunately fell short of the mark, the wind died out and our steamer escaped from the enemy, our flag proudly throwing its folds to the breeze, as if to cheer the brave men on board who were ready to sink the ship rather than surrender.

Few of the passengers slept the night following that exciting experience, and, after landing, we learned that the Sumter had waited for three days off the island that the steamer had avoided.

The captain who proved so true to his trust resigned after reaching New York, and before the war was over he became one of the bravest and most successful of the Southern blockade runners.

The Bay of New York is always beautiful but it seemed more beautiful than ever, as it came into sight of the passengers of that steamer, worn out with the excitement and fears of the voyage.

We found my father awaiting us at the wharf and in a few days we were on our way to St. Louis, where my father had been given

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

the command of the Western Department. As we passed through Altoona we were overwhelmed with the news of the defeat of our forces at the first Bull Run.

There were busy days ahead at St. Louis, drilling the troops, transforming the ferry boats into gunboats, reinforcing the outposts and developing raw troops into an army ready for the field. Martial law had been declared and the women formed sewing circles, anxious to do their part for the men who must face the roar of the cannon.

The sympathy of the city was largely with the South, and it was a difficult matter for the war sewing circle to find a place to hold its meetings, until a German woman opened her home for the cause. I remember that the women who stood with the North made it a custom to carry their knitting into the public places and streets of the city, to show their colors as it were, and many a woman have I seen putting an odd stitch now and then into a sock for a soldier afield, while she was on her way to the sewing circle headquarters.

I remember too, that after I had presented my quota of knitted socks, I was told that they would do for hospital use, for as no two were of the same size, they would be suitable only for men who had lost a leg.

It was during those days in St. Louis that

BLACK POINT AND WAR DAYS

my father established the first Union Depot in this country, a system pretty generally followed now by every city of any importance.

It was then, too, that my father sent Gen. U. S. Grant to Cairo to take command of the district of South East Missouri.

Miss Dorothea Dix, organizer of the National Hospitals, was a guest at our home in St. Louis in those days of preparation for war, and my mother accompanied her on her trips through the hospitals.

At Jefferson Barracks they came upon fever patients, too ill to help themselves, with mugs of black coffee and pieces of salt pork laid upon their chests. The men who had offered their lives for their country's cause were too ill with the fever to raise the crude food to their lips; there were no tables or hospital accessories, and so the food was laid upon their chests, in order that they might get it when required. In another hospital there were no shades on the windows, and the sun blazed in upon the sick and dying men; there were no funds with which to purchase supplies, and my mother took it upon herself to see that the boys in blue had at least the comforts of civilization. Before nightfall she had blue shades hung on the windows of

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

the hospital, fitted it out with bedside tables, and bought up all the china mugs in town.

From St. Louis we went to New York, making our home there and on the Hudson, near Tarrytown and Peekskill, where the boys went to preparatory school for West Point and Annapolis.

While we lived on the Hudson, my father and I spent much of our time riding, he on his Irish hunter, a sorrel beauty, "Don Totoi," and I on my thoroughbred Kentucky mare that had the proud record of having made a ninety-six mile reconnoitering march in twenty-four hours during the war.

We rode from Peekskill to New York, and from the Hudson to the Sound, over roads that were none too good but enjoying every mile of the way.

My mother occupied herself during those years with her music and with charities, her favorite charity being that concerning children. When supplies were being contributed to the stricken South, the matter of delivering them presented a problem not easily solved. Through her appeal to General N. P. Banks, then a member of Congress, a man-of-war was detailed for this purpose, the courtesy not only settling the question of delivering the supplies without cost, but proving a great factor in cementing a bond

BLACK POINT AND WAR DAYS

of friendship between the North and South. In those days more than ten millions of supplies including food and farming implements, were contributed by the North and sent to our brothers in the South.

Our boys were interested in sailing and skating on the river, and our Hudson home was gay and happy. It was built of rough gray stone and surrounded by trees, commanding a splendid view of Haverstraw Bay and the Catskills. From this home we started on one of our trips to Paris, and while we were in that city we received a message from a friend in Copenhagen inviting us to come there for the marriage feast of the present King and Queen of Denmark, who were then very young.

We had planned a tour of Switzerland, but upon receipt of the message from our friend, we hurried to Copenhagen. Most of the society functions were over for the summer, but Queen Louise graciously gave a special audience to my mother and myself, who were presented by the wife of the American Minister.

The Queen indicated that the wife of the minister need not remain in the salon, so she withdrew to join the ladies-in-waiting, while Queen Louise received us alone, talking of the coming festivities and showing us a fine

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

marble bust which she told us had just arrived from her "dear son, the Prince of Wales,"—the late Edward the Seventh of England.

We were included in all the marriage festivities, from the wedding breakfast to the big ball, the social event of the moment. At the ball, mother was invited to stand behind the queen with the ladies in waiting, and was invited to the royal table for supper.

While my mother stood close to the queen a guest asked me to point out to her the American lady present. I showed her my mother.

"That lady in violet and white, with the white hair?" she asked.

I told her that was the American lady, and she replied:

"That's an Englishwoman; her hair is dressed to suit her face, and not to suit the prevailing fashion."

Finally, I told her that I knew the lady I had pointed out was the American lady, for I was her daughter.

"Why," she declared, "are you an American? Your hair is not dressed in the fashion, either!"

An incident of the royal ball at Copenhagen that remains with me, concerns the entry of the Queen Dowager into the ball-

BLACK POINT AND WAR DAYS

room. Everyone was dancing, music floated through the rooms, when at the approach of the Queen Dowager all was silent; the music ceased and the dancers fell back, while the King walked forward to meet her, escorting her to the chair by the throne, the Dowager Queen being the aunt of the King. I remember that she wore a gray moire gown, lace trimmed, with high neck and long sleeves, a large diamond studded watch her most striking ornament. The blaze of the diamonds made her a true picture of a fairy god-mother, into whose lap the cornucopia of wealth had been upturned.

Before we left Copenhagen, the mistress of the robes, at the request of Queen Louise, asked mother where my clothes were made, as "some of my dresses were more chic than anything in the trousseau of the Princess Royal."

During our six weeks' stay in Copenhagen, we met Hans Christian Andersen, who was greatly interested in hearing through us of the true appreciation the American nation had for his works. He read to us, at his own suggestion, his latest manuscript story, "The Thistle," a compliment we were told we should value highly. An English speaking friend gave us an abridged translation, so we followed his Danish easily.

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

My father was recalled to the United States on business, mother accompanying him, while I remained in Dresden to superintend the education of my youngest brother. I was in Dresden when the French minister offered the affront to King William at Ems, and I felt that war would follow. Accordingly I made plans to return to America, and when at two o'clock one summer afternoon, war had been declared, I started for New York at five o'clock the same day, taking the last passenger train out of Dresden.

We passed through Berlin as the crowd had assembled to receive King William on his return, and at Hamburg were detained four days, hoping to have a convoy of German men-of-war take the steamer through the channel. This request of the steamship company was not granted, however, and we sailed by way of Heligoland, along the coast of Scotland, keeping in sight of land, and passing the Orkneys, then on to Newfoundland and into New York—the last German passenger steamer afloat until after the close of the Franco-Prussian war.

Our beautiful home by the Hudson was later swept away in a railroad panic, and once more we made our way to the coast, my father having been appointed Governor of

BLACK POINT AND WAR DAYS

the Territory of Arizona, and our lines cast in Prescott for some years.

We went over the Union Pacific Railroad, the first time an "Iron Horse" had ever taken us on the overland trip. Seated directly behind my father during that journey, was a New York banker who continually complained of the discomforts of the trip, as well as of the time it consumed, the trip then being made in seven days. My father, after listening to the New Yorker, turned to my mother and said:

"It required a great deal more than seven days to make this trip in my time, and a great part of it was made on foot. There were also a few discomforts along the line of march—hunger, for instance, and cold!"

We smiled at the contrast, and were thankful indeed to cover the journey in what seemed so short a time to us.

FROM YUMA TO PRESCOTT IN ARMY AMBULANCES

WHEN President Hayes appointed my father Governor of the Territory of Arizona, we were living in New York, and in order to reach Prescott the family was obliged to go first across the country to San Francisco, and thence continue the trip to Arizona. The tiresome delays and personal discomforts of the trip can scarcely be realized by the people of the Great Today, who cross the country almost on the wings of the air, and to whom the thought of a trip from the coast to Arizona seems scarcely worthy of more than passing mention. In 1878, however, it took seven days to make the journey from New York to San Francisco, and that was considered pretty fast traveling, and rather luxurious, too.

It was in September, 1878, when we started from San Francisco to what seemed almost like an undiscovered country, and the trip was filled with many misgivings. The route from San Francisco to Los Angeles was over the Southern Pacific, along the San

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

Joaquin Valley, the coast line then undreamed of and not even considered in the light of a possibility.

Alexis Godey, who had entered California with my father, accompanied us as far as Los Angeles. When nearing that city, we were met by General Sherman, who was returning from an inspection tour through New Mexico and Arizona, by way of Prescott, and in his own brusque fashion, he gave us the encouraging news that the roads to Prescott were vile, and well nigh impassable.

I remember well that General Sherman and father held such a lengthy conversation that several times the conductor of the Sherman train urged the general to hurry. Finally, nettled at the repeated commands to join his train, Sherman replied:

“ Don't be in a hurry; this is only a single track, and, anyway, had it not been for the men of the army, you would never have had a California in which to build your railroad! ”

The engineering triumphs and the beautiful scenery of Tahatchpi Pass engrossed our attention and kept us in a reminiscent mood until we reached Los Angeles. There father was serenaded by the citizens, and we passed the day with Mrs. Severance of Boston, an old time friend, and true.

FROM YUMA TO PRESCOTT IN ARMY AMBULANCES

While at Los Angeles, Mr. and Mrs. Otis of Santa Barbara came to meet us and that trip so short now was one of importance in that day. Mrs. Otis was anxious to hear the latest word concerning her brother, son of Dr. Morton of ether fame, who was then only a young physician, but who soon won and retained his place as one of New York's most noted neurologists.

While Santa Barbara seemed so far away, my brother Frank met in Los Angeles some school friends from Dresden, illustrating the fact that after all, the world is not so very large, nor can distance keep friends apart.

While at Los Angeles, we went up on Fort Hill and viewed the emplacement and slight remains of the demi-lune battery thrown up there to command the then little pueblo of Los Angeles nestled below it; we looked at the Church of Our Lady of the Angels and lived over again in retrospect, the days when father was Military Governor of Los Angeles.

A few years ago I stood in the same spot, where in commemoration of the old fort and its defenders, the patriotic women of Los Angeles raised the flag that now gives its folds to the breeze each day from the tall staff at the head of Broadway, above the entrance to the tunnel. A nephew of Kit Car-

FROM YUMA TO PRESCOTT IN ARMY AMBULANCES

son and myself, for our names' sake, were asked to run up the flag, which we were proud to do in memory of Auld Lang Syne. The flag was large and the staff tall, so Mr. Carson did most of the pulling, though I confess that I did my best at the halliards.

On the platform that day were seated Mr. Moore of Carpentaria and his daughter, of the family of Captain Moore, for whom the fort was named, a gallant officer who lost his life in the struggle to take California. After the ceremonies were concluded, we stood around in groups talking of other days, when a gentleman came forward and presented me with a bit of the original flagstaff; he happened to be on the hill when it was unearthed as the street line was straightened, and he preserved two pieces, one for an old G. A. R. friend and the other for my mother. My mother was ill at the time, so after her death, he gave me the precious bit of wood.

But to return to the Los Angeles of 1878. We left the city on a palace car, and the trip was enlivened by the presence of a diverting army bride, who was gayly on her way to join her cadet husband at Yuma—and the way was so pleasant to her in the joy of her heart, that just the sight of her made it pleasant for all of us.

An aunt of mine seeking to lighten the

FROM YUMA TO PRESCOTT IN ARMY AMBULANCES

burden of life in the new country, induced a Chinese cook whom she had in her family for seven years, to accompany us to Prescott. The Chinese was traveling in the coach ahead, without a railroad ticket, and when asked for his fare replied:

“ Me alla-same General Frémont.”

This amused my father, and when the conductor repeated the remark to him, he gave him the transportation and assured him that the Chinese really was “ alla-same Frémont.” My aunt’s generous sacrifice in relinquishing her good Chinaman was a priceless boon to us during those three years in Arizona. Amid all the discomforts we experienced he proved always calm, reliable, uncomplaining, equal to all emergencies.

At Colton we stopped for lunch, the lunch-room well managed by an English woman who was then grieving over the loss of her husband. We had met so many widows in the wild west, who did not seem to mind the fact that they were widowed, that paradoxical as it may seem, we really felt relieved to meet one widow who sincerely mourned the loss of her helpmate.

We reached Yuma at last, and bade goodbye to parlor cars and railroads, and started out for the rest of the journey in real pioneer

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

fashion. Major Lord, U. S. A., met us at Yuma, with army ambulances. The post quarters consisted of a fine adobe house, with rinconara fireplaces and meat safe beds. The fireplaces were built in the corners of the house, because they threw out more heat when built in that fashion, and the beds were slipped in frames which resembled cages, covered with wire net to protect the occupants from scorpions and other unwelcome denizens of the plains.

Here we saw the first green Bermuda grass, with plenty of cottonwood and castor trees nearby, for the post stood on a bluff overlooking the Colorado River, affording a delightful view of the bottom land below.

When we started from Yuma, three ambulances were necessary to transport the party, each ambulance drawn by six good mules, in fine condition, and in charge of experienced drivers. Father, mother and myself rode in the first ambulance, and as the procession left Yuma we could see the Indians in their picturesque coats and long red sashes, with legs bare, eye the wonderful procession with much the same delight that the small boy of to-day views a circus parade.

When we came to the Gila River the water was very high, reaching above the hubs of the ambulances. The mules made a pretty

FROM YUMA TO PRESCOTT IN ARMY AMBULANCES

picture, as with head and necks and ears erect, they made their way across, truly a study in dark brown and an eloquent illustration of the fact that "blood will tell" even in mules.

For a day we crossed river bottom lands, with nothing but tall cactus plants to break the monotony of the scene. We saw a steamboat with "hoppers" on it—a sight no longer to be seen in this day. The "hoppers" consisted of two long stout poles fastened to either side of the boat, used to help the craft across the sand bars, and used in those days on all boats that plied the shallow rivers.

At Castle Dome Landing we pitched our tents, on the bank of the Colorado River, with the adobe houses nearby standing out as if in bas-relief. The Castle Dome Mine, eighteen miles away, knew the hardships of the pioneer, all the water for the mine being taken up the long eighteen miles in the wagons which brought down the ore.

Our tent became an improvised military camp, and while it was being prepared, mother and myself spent the time at the adobe house of the superintendent of the mine. The floor was of earth, with cactus wattled roofs, and a large Olla filled with cool water—that boon to the traveler—be-

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

spoke the hospitality of the crude house. Hanging against a roof post was a pair of opera glasses, a real sign of civilization to me, and against another post, around which a writing table was built, was suspended a tiny slipper, which served as a watch-pocket. The slipper was so delicately fashioned that it might well be termed the fabled property of Cinderella, and when the owner of the house was questioned concerning it, he replied:

“ Yes, it is a dainty slipper; but I would not bring the owner here—not until better quarters are prepared! ”

And so, ever the route of travel was brightened by a touch of romance-illuminated pages as it were, of the Book of Love, enshrined in honest hearts on the desert wilds.

Early in the evening we found the softest places in the sand and there spread our blankets. Mother slept on the ambulance cushions, as became her custom, and thus enjoyed the one luxury of the trip. Father and the men slept outside the tent which was reserved for mother and me. Dust storms were all too frequent, which, coupled with the hard beds, added no peace to the rest.

On September 30, the day we left Castle Dome, Captain Woodruff met us on his way

FROM YUMA TO PRESCOTT IN ARMY AMBULANCES

to Yuma, and the echo of his exultant cry: "New York for two years," is still ringing in my ears. What it meant to him only the pioneer who has broken his crust of bread amidst hardships and privations can know.

We left the camp, driving along dry beds of stony creeks, with bits of jimson weed in blossom scattered here and there, as if to cheer the lonely way. In the distance, we saw a queer shape that resembled a big yucca tree, and we were divided in our opinion as to whether the curious shape was a tree or a man. Coming closer, we saw it was a human form, a traveler with a pack on his back, which gave him the curious appearance of the yucca tree.

Mother offered a drink of water to the man, who was a miner making his way across the country, and we learned that his canteen was empty, though it was twelve long miles to the nearest spring.

"I have done too much walking in my day," said my father, "to let that man walk. I will give the man a lift if McGrath (the head teamster, who had charge of the caravan) can fit him in with the other men."

So we took the traveler with us for the day, but before nightfall decided to carry him through to Prescott, a distance of about two hundred miles. The man made himself

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

useful by helping the camp cook and I am sure that he never forgot the friendly lift that caught up with him amid the cactus and enabled him to make the remainder of his journey in such comfort. The road was very rough, interspersed with arroyas, dry at that season, winding in and out of stony hills to the canyon, and the wagons creaked and groaned as we slowly jolted on our way.

The third night out we camped at Horse Tanks where cactus and stones were plentiful, but where there was scarcely sufficient brushwood for the camp fires. There was plenty of water, however, the place taking its name from three basins of graded size, which were hollowed by natural forces out of the natural rocks. The size of the basins varied from that of the ordinary cistern so common in those days, to that of a large bath tub. These basins caught the watershed from the adjacent hills, and as they never went dry they must also have had springs which the Americans had not then discovered. Well worn Indian trails showed plainly through the hills, showing that the red men knew where to find the never failing fountain. We saw only one lone Indian, however, and when night came we picked away the largest stones from under our blankets and went to sleep. During the night our dog Thaw, came tear-

FROM YUMA TO PRESCOTT IN ARMY AMBULANCES

ing into the tent howling with pain, his body covered with cactus needles. It was evident that he had chased a rabbit and was foolish enough to follow the fleet-footed animal into the cactus brush.

We left Horse Tanks at daybreak, and passed through a country dotted with yellow flowers resembling seaweed, and when we reached a place with the elegant title of "Water Hole," we watered the eighteen mules. The remains of an adobe house and an Indian village lent a sort of weirdness to the scene, and a buckboard on the way to Yuma, was the only sign of life that crossed our path. It was a decidedly wild country, and yet we pitched our tents and went to sleep without even the thought of having a guard.

The next stop was Tyson's well, where there was a neat and commodious adobe house with a well forty-five feet deep. Here we saw a picket fence and grape vines running around a typical German home, and only those who have viewed the desert can imagine what a welcome sign those emblems of civilization were to the travelers.

From Tyson's Well to Desert Station, our next stop, there was a splendid naturally macadamized road of black altered rock, and when we reached Desert Station we pitched

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

our tents on clean sand. The small bushes near by, somehow made us think of Bar Harbor, and we sat until far into the night under the glorious stars and beautiful moonlight, talking of Bar Harbor and discussing the merits of an eastern publisher who had published some volumes of my grandfather's. The station master at the place announced that they kept no liquors: "The place is too lonesome for drinking," he said, which sentence eloquently described the situation.

We had breakfast by starlight, and Venus was regal in her beauty at dawn. Through the island-like Black Rock Hills we went our way until we reached Mesquit Station, where there were plenty of Mexicans and where we found the best water of the entire route, with a tidy Mexican woman in charge of the adobe house of the burg. The weather was very hot, and even the beautiful blue black butterflies seemed to be affected by the intense heat.

Fly's Station, the next stop, was dotted with flowers very much resembling the California poppies only they were so much smaller, and we gathered a bunch of them, in memory of Dr. Morton, our dear friend so many miles away who had told us of a similar flower growing near the diamond fields of



Headquarters of General Frémont at Santa Barbara



AMBULANCES

or Hoyt of
to assume.
mediately re-
tinued the
ashion, and
glimpse of
egated by a
appearance
its lonely

en in those
were plenty
The place
fact that it
ndians and
the Indians
d whites in
mark their

is to carry
ld of battle,
e the whites
nents. The
when only
left to dot
to pile them
ght read,"
at an Indian

trip peeped

Date Creek Station, our next stop, stands out like a mile-post on that eventful journey, for lo, it was there that my brother Frank killed a hare, and great was his joy thereat. The yellow flowers and wind-swept bushes somehow gave the place a beach-like appearance, and a falcon hawk watched us from the summit of a rock for at least twenty minutes, a picture of natural beauty.

We drove out of the plains and into the valleys, the mountain side covered with flowers, pale blue and scarlet, with the dainty Rocky Mountain flowers in riotous profusion.

Kelsey Station was the next camping spot, a beautiful grass country with the mountain silhouetted against the sky as if in a great white blaze. Here we met a woman, careworn and weary, whose husband kept the station; they had moved from Nevada to Illinois, from there to Nebraska, thence to Colorado, California and finally, Arizona.

"I am 'most beat out from moving," declared the woman, whose husband was likewise the Justice of the Peace of the place, and from whom my father took the oath of office as Governor of the Territory of Arizona.

Governor Hoyt met us at this place to talk over with my father the affairs of the territory. He asked my father to issue a proclamation about the approaching election, which

FROM YUMA TO PRESCOTT IN ARMY AMBULANCES

he did, thereby relieving Governor Hoyt of some tangle which he did not care to assume.

This matter settled, Hoyt immediately returned to Prescott, while we continued the journey in the usual leisurely fashion, and leaving this place we had our first glimpse of a pretty farm house, the farm irrigated by a friendly creek. The prosperous appearance of the place was emphasized by its lonely situation.

We were nearing civilization even in those days, and at Skull Valley there were plenty of good farms and farm houses. The place took its weird name from the fact that it was the last place where the Indians and whites met in deadly combat, the Indians piling the skulls of the vanquished whites in mounds along the way, as if to mark their conquest.

The Indian custom of course, is to carry away their own dead from the field of battle, and give them Indian burial, while the whites are left to the mercy of the elements. The fact that years after the battle when only the skulls of the white men were left to dot the plains, the Indians returned to pile them in tiers, that all "who ran might read," illustrates full well the theory that an Indian never forgets.

The first pretty grass of the trip peeped

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

up from the ground at Dixon's Farm House, and thence we drove through a forest of pines and began the steep climb up the mountain. Conservation was then in the mind of my father, for he warned the party to be careful lest they start a forest fire.

At Iron Spring there were many teams and a number of cattle, while the pines and granite boulders resembled the White Mountains of New Hampshire. We were then about six thousand feet above the level of the sea, and one of the mountains looking for all the world like a lion with two paws extended, boasted of no better name than "Thumb Butte." We enjoyed a splendid view of the mountain, though the effect of the woodman's axe was all too evident in the forest.

Two miles outside Prescott, Governor Hoyt and the Territorial Secretary, with other officials and their wives met us, and in the only barouche of the town, my father and Governor Hoyt rode into Prescott. Mrs. Hoyt took a seat in our ambulance, and we followed the triumphal procession—the end of the journey reached at last!

In the welcoming party there was one beautiful woman who wore a bewitching leg-horn hat trimmed with dark red silk and bunches of nodding poppies, and when we had the first glimpse of her in the distance,

FROM YUMA TO PRESCOTT IN ARMY AMBULANCES

father remarked that he hoped *all* the women of Prescott were as pretty!

When we reached Prescott, Mr. and Mrs. T. Fitch, with the freehanded hospitality of the far west, turned their house over to us until we could find one for ourselves. During that time, the Fitch family camped in the law office of Mr. Fitch, though the family shared the meals with us at their home. There was no hotel in the Prescott of those days, and our stay might have been hard while securing a house were it not for the generous hospitality of our hosts.

We were served a six-course dinner that first night in Prescott and were overjoyed at finding awaiting us innumerable letters from the loved ones at home. For be it on the mountain side or in the valley, in the desert or on the plains, in sunshine or in storm, there is no place like home, and nothing else in this great wide world quite so dear to the heart of the wanderer as are those letters from home!



THREE YEARS IN PRESCOTT

SOON after our arrival in Prescott, we learned that the leading merchant of the town was "going inside," as a trip to the coast was called, and was willing to rent his house during his absence. We quickly availed ourselves of the opportunity and during the few weeks while we were house-hunting for a permanent abode, we enjoyed the luxury of his plastered house. There were few plastered houses in those days, cement selling for sixteen dollars a barrel and plasterers receiving seven dollars a day for their labor.

Finally, we found a house that was built upon a hilltop, its walls made of solid planks unadorned, save by a covering of cotton sheeting. These plank walls were made from the great pine and juniper trees that grew on the summit of the surrounding hills—trees that were beautiful to look at, but alas, that were infested with household pests that lived and thrived in the trees there as ants do in other states.

Before we could move into it a thorough

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

disinfecting was necessary and workmen were sent to give the place heroic treatment. The cotton sheeting was removed from the walls, the planks scoured again and again with boiling lye, until finally it was pronounced habitable. This scouring process was continued at intervals during the three years we lived in Prescott, and in the end, the house was made very comfortable.

The salary of my father as Governor of the Territory of Arizona, was two thousand dollars per year; the house rent was ninety dollars per month, and our Chinese cook was paid forty dollars a month for his services, so that there was little left for luxuries. The keeping of horses was an impossibility on that salary, hay selling for fifty dollars a ton, and yet the people of to-day are wont to complain now and then of high rents and the increased cost of living!

The army post near by could have all the wood it could use at three dollars per cord, tomatoes for twelve cents a can and sugar for twelve cents a pound. But the people in the village were compelled to pay nine dollars and fifty cents a cord for the same wood, twenty-five cents a can for the tomatoes and thirty cents a pound for the sugar. So that Uncle Sam had considerably the best of the

THREE YEARS IN PRESCOTT

bargain, as far as the villagers were concerned, our family included among the latter.

Prescott contained between eighteen hundred and two thousand people, and the social side of life was not at all unpleasant. The women were sociable, the army people were always on friendly terms with the villagers, and private theatricals were frequently given. There was considerable musical and dramatic talent in the village and many affairs were given for charity. The best violinist of the place, as I remember him, kept a faro bank when not entertaining the people with his music. I heard a much traveled easterner say not many years ago, that he never saw a better production of Pinafore than in Prescott in those days, the opera being produced by local talent.

There were many interesting people among the pioneers, and one of them remains a friend to this day. Her life story is typical with many others of that time who ventured far into the wilds in search of an illusive and alluring fortune that ever kept just a little ahead, as if to tempt the wanderer still farther into the realms of an undiscovered country.

The lady to whom I refer crossed the plains with her brother when she was about

fifteen years of age. A young Indian chief rode beside their caravan for about three weeks of the long journey and so smitten was he with the charms of the pale faced maiden that he offered many valuable ponies for her, and seemed quite piqued that his offer of trade was spurned by her brother.

Later in life this woman came upon an experience spared to most women. With her young baby, she was traveling from Fort Mojave to Prescott, at a time when the country was so wild that life trembled in the balance, as does an insecure leaf upon a tree. As the mother and child were ready to leave the fort, the brave woman learned that three men had been killed on the stage coming into the fort from Prescott, and it was more than a week before the stage driver would venture out on the return trip, hoping that in the interval the country would be cleared of the blood-thirsty savages who were roaming in such great numbers over the plains. The stage was so bloody with the evidence of the murders on the incoming trip, and the driver found it so impossible to wash away the stains of the life blood of his three passengers that he covered the stage with a piece of cotton cloth. The bit of white was a sign familiar to every pioneer, and all too well the

THREE YEARS IN PRESCOTT

young mother knew the tragedy that its presence implied.

This woman, however, finally reached the stage where she could afford to boast of a plastered house in Prescott, around which were planted hardy trees and bushes. She evolved an ingenious way of keeping the bushes alive in that dry country by planting beside each bush a five gallon can pierced with holes and filling these cans with water each day. The tiny holes permitted the water to leak slowly through to the shrubs, and thus they were kept alive, even though the growth was none too luxuriant.

During the two rainy seasons of the year, the most beautiful wild flowers imaginable were plentiful at Prescott, great masses of the wild blooms dotting the hillsides. When the wild flowers were not in bloom, mother and I kept the house supplied with flowers by sawing off the cactus blooms of yellow and dark red, and burying them in a platter which was filled with sand. We used the top of a tin can for a saw in gathering the blooms, and thus spared our hands from the scratches of the cactus.

The sunsets were the most gorgeous that I have ever seen beneath the wide heavens. With the sinking of sun the heat van-

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

ished into thin air, and we felt the chill of the night air even though protected with warm shawls. The lunar rainbows were likewise most wonderful to behold, and so nature seemed to assume her most gracious aspect, as if to make amends for the hardships of the frontier life.

For the three years that we lived there, I knew that the wonders of the Grand Canyon were near at hand, but a hard fate made it a financial impossibility to more than know that the gorgeous canyon was at the very door. I could see the San Francisco mountains from the hilltops, and learned to look upon the three peaks as one would look upon dear but absent friends, and the mountains seemed to nod a friendly message over the broad horizon.

When my father issued the first Thanksgiving Day proclamation in the Territory, we were surprised to find that it had not been the custom to observe the day. I like to think that it was our expressions of astonishment in the matter that helped to bring about its observance the following years.

There were no churches when we first went to Prescott, but before we left there the Catholic and Methodist churches had been established.

THREE YEARS IN PRESCOTT

One of the residents whom I shall always remember was Father Desjardins, the French curé of the town. I was the only person there who could converse with him in his native tongue, and he spent many pleasant hours at our home happy to hear the sound of his own language, while the townspeople were busy with the rumor that I was being converted to Catholicism.

The young curé had his own troubles in the town.

“ My people think I am extravagant,” he once confided to me, “ because I keep an open fire. The light from the fire saves oil,” he added, “ and the fire-light pictures at eventide, at least remind me of home—and it is murderously lonesome here.”

Sentiments that I could almost endorse, at times.

During our stay there the sisters of St. Joseph came from St. Louis to establish a hospital, and as my mother had known them in their home city, she lent them every possible aid in the work.

In war days, members of that same order of nuns had been sworn in as army nurses (at the suggestion of my mother) and they served during the long years of that war. My father allotted them a large new hospital

THREE YEARS IN PRESCOTT

building that had recently been erected in St. Louis, and the story of their tender devotion to the sick and dying soldiers preceded them to Prescott.

The heat was so intense and the clothing of the nuns so heavy, that my mother persuaded the bishop to obtain permission for the nuns, from the Mother House at St. Louis, to wear cooler clothing; and thus the order was issued that the nuns on duty in that sultry country should wear thinner veils and dresses than did the sisters elsewhere, an order which is still in force.

Mother John and Mother Monica were the two nuns first sent to establish the Prescott hospital, and though the latter was a frail woman in mortal terror of a mule, when duty made it necessary, she cheerfully mounted one of the little animals and rode through the mines soliciting aid for the proposed work.

Mother John died while we were there—worked to death the death certificate should have read—and her funeral has not a parallel perhaps in the history of that country.

There were no hearses in the town, and so the top was removed from an army ambulance, and with General Wilcox and my young brother Frank representing my father, as

THREE YEARS IN PRESCOTT

leading pallbearers, the mournful funeral procession wended its way to the lonely graveyard over the hillside, where a rude grave was made and loving hands covered it with wild flowers and blooming cactus, though the gentle nun died so far away from her own home.

My mother took a great interest in the public school and one day happened in when the history class was in session. She heard the old, old libel against Marie Antoinette, in which the queen is charged with replying, when told that her people were starving:

“ Haven’t they even a cake? ”

My mother explained the meaning of this answer to the children, gave them a better idea of the libeled queen, and they were so interested in her tale that within a few days a committee called upon her and asked her to give the history class a talk every Friday during the school year, a task which she readily imposed upon herself and which she continued for ten months.

Miss Lucy Sherman was then the teacher of that school and her brother being the general superintendent of public instruction, appointed by my father. Miss Sherman, now Mrs. E. P. Cark of Los Angeles, has ever cherished the memory of her volunteer assistant of those days, and the friendship that

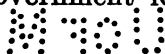
grew up between us has ripened with the years, and to-day Mrs. Clark and her gracious young daughters always make me welcome in their beautiful home in this garden spot of California.

Two legislatures convened during our stay in Prescott and enacted many laws, each succeeding legislature, however, so amending them that the original laws were of no avail—as legislative bodies have a way of doing, even to-day!

Before our first year in the town drew to an end, the health of my mother was so seriously affected by the high altitude that she was sent home to New York. She soon recovered her old-time strength, though she never again ventured into Prescott, or into any other high altitude.

The Hualapi Indians roamed over the plains nearby, and were always a friendly tribe. Many a time that tribe helped General Crook chase the treacherous Apaches, the Hualapis trailing them, while the American troops followed.

The friendly tribe has all but vanished now, not more than twenty or thirty of that fearless band remaining. Their very friendliness worked their own undoing. Since they were no trouble to the government, the government left them severely alone. The



THREE YEARS IN PRESCOTT

tribe did not want a reservation, merely the privilege to hunt wild game in the mountains, and gather the seeds upon which they lived. They wanted the springs too, but gradually the whites took possession of them and trampled under their feet the luckless tribe. The cattle drove the wild game away from the mountains, and the whites claimed the water rights, one after another, until only desolation was left for the Hualapis.

At Peach Tree Springs, on the Santa Fe, lived the Supais, another peaceful tribe. Their reservation was in the heart of Peach Tree Canyon, close to the Grand Canyon of Arizona, and the tribe still own the place. They raise fresh vegetables and fruit, the oldest peach trees of our countryside growing there, planted long ago by the Spanish padres.

The place is noted also for its fine springs and the value of the spot tempted the whites many years ago. My father warned Carl Schurz then Secretary of the Interior, that unless the government interfered, the reservation would be wiped out—Uncle Sam interfered and the Supais fared better than did the mournful Hualapis.

Two years after my mother left Prescott, the state capital was dancing on wheels and rumor had it that it would be removed to



RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

Tucson. My father had suffered with the mountain fever at Prescott and seeking a change of climate as well as desirous of knowing the country, he decided to move to Tucson and thither we went, pitching our tents like the Arab of old, hopeful for the new country and feverishly anxious to see the desert blossom like the rose.

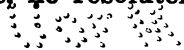


THE YEAR AT TUCSON

IT was in March, 1881, when we left Prescott for Tucson and began again, as it were, a new life. I had grown to like Prescott and was particularly fond of its people, the women having been so warm hearted and hospitable that it was not so very hard to forget that I was many weary miles away from my home part of the country.

Tucson was about three thousand feet lower than Prescott, and perhaps was then one of the oldest as well as one of the most unsanitary towns in America. The heavy summer rains drew the poison out of the sun dried soil, until even the seasoned Americans fell by the wayside, as flowers fall after a blighting storm.

"You will die of the fever in Tucson," I was told when first I mentioned the plans to move there, a prophecy which came near being fulfilled. There was but one "vegetable man" in Prescott in those days who had asparagus for sale—a vegetable of which I was very fond—and when he learned that we were to leave for other parts, he resolutely



refused to longer supply our table. Tradesmen were not so keen after the trade as they are to-day for there was practically no competition—absolutely none as far as our “vegetable man” was concerned; and so, to all our entreaties we received the one cold reply:

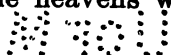
“Nothing to sell to you. You are going to leave Prescott.”

So while I watched our neighbors receive supplies of the luscious asparagus, I could at least console myself with the thought that the family would soon be deprived of such things anyway, and were only being forced to an earlier acquaintance with the hardship.

The time at Tucson was filled to overflowing with excitement, one thing succeeding another with lightning like rapidity, though one experience in that town—the blowing up of a powder magazine—almost defies description.

The magazine was situated about a mile from town and at the time of the explosion I was the only member of the family at Tucson, with our faithful Chinese cook and a maid of all work for my companions.

The great comet of that year had filled the hearts of both whites and Mexicans with fear and dread, even though the scenic effect in the heavens was beautiful to behold. Most



THE YEAR AT TUCSON

of the people slept on what might be termed the sidewalks, and in going to post letters on the Overland Mail, I often passed the rows of sleepers, in company with our dog Thaw.

The night of the blowing up of the powder magazine, the walks were lined with the sleeping populace. I slept in the corral back of our home, its high walls giving it the seclusion of a private boudoir, and the maid shared this "apartment" with me. A second before the explosion I was wide awake. Above were the shining stars, the comet in its almost supernatural beauty, clear skies and an almost living illustration of "Peace on earth, Good will to men," when lo, with a roar like unto that of a hundred thousand cannons, the town was instantly covered in darkness. The heavens were obscured by an inky pall, which hung not more than ten feet above the people. The soil became covered with a black mist resembling burnt flour and as the glory of the stars was blotted out, the night was filled with the piercing screams of a terrified multitude. Men and women fell instinctively on their knees, beseeching mercy from the Father of all, while here and there could be heard the rushing footsteps of fleeing people—fleeing, they knew not from what or whence!

Viewed in retrospect, the sight was won-

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

derful to behold! The earth blown heavenward, fell again like a black snow, covering the ground like a harbinger of death. People forgot about the scorpions and were rushing barefooted hither and thither, feeling in the blackness of the night for friends, and anxious to make peace with foes!

Ten minutes, which seemed like an hour, of unspeakable terror reigned, before the townspeople learned what had caused the trouble, and were assured that the end of the world was not at hand.

“The powder magazine has blown up,” cried out the carrier of the joyous news, for it was joyous news indeed to know that it was only a terrific explosion, with no loss of life, and not the weird farewell of the beautiful comet.

Where the magazine had been two minutes before the explosion, there was a great hole in the earth, as if a hundred monsters had mowed to the bottom crust, and there was not a trace of a wall left to show that an adobe had once been there.

The earth, blown up with such tremendous force, floated through the town, covering everything and everybody as it wended its inky way. The housewives were kept busy for weeks cleaning the humble adobes after

THE YEAR AT TUCSON

the unwelcome visitor of the night—the “black snow,” as the people called it.

The tense moments of terror were relieved later by hours of almost hysterical laughter. I remember well that scarcely anyone could be found who was willing to admit that the sight and sound of the night had frightened him.

“Oh, I was not a bit afraid, I *knew* it wasn’t the comet, but you ought to have seen John. He was a picture of fear!”

Then the laugh would go round, while John explained that he was not afraid—it was Jill who trembled and whose teeth chattered in the very agony of terror.

The house we occupied at Tucson was noticeable mainly for its very long rooms, and it contained a “sacred parlor,” as I used to call it, because the owners of the house never thought of using what was their best room.

The hallway was really the living room. The door was left open all night but closed during the day, in order to keep the room in habitable condition. It was known as a cool room—exceptionally cool—so cool in fact, that its thermometer never registered much higher than 97 or 100 degrees in the coolest part of the day, when the hall was thought to be delightfully cool. Towards evening, it

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

was like a bake oven and had to be abandoned for the corral behind the house.

I can remember using the "sacred parlor" just once during my stay at Tucson. Archbishop Salpointe came to pay a little visit and I ushered him into the best room in the house. The piano was there and a Prussian soldier from Fort Lowell, who happened to be a fine musician, was in the room tuning the instrument. Soon we were joined by two nuns from the nearby hospital, and we were deeply interested in a tale the Archbishop was telling us concerning his experience in the wilds, when the front door burst open and a man, a stranger to me, called out:

"Miss Frémont, Garfield has been shot and is dying!"

It was like a thunderbolt from a clear sky—almost as terrible as the explosion of my previous experience—and we were all paralyzed, as it were, with the shock and the fear of the consequences.

Finally, the tenseness of the situation was broken and I looked to where the good nuns had been sitting; they were down on their knees imploring the Heavenly Father to save the President—to spare him to the people! There may have been more pretentious memorial meetings held elsewhere, there may have been more elaborate offers of kindly

THE YEAR AT TUCSON

solicitude for the welfare of the man who was destined to be a martyr for his country, but nowhere on God's green earth was there more genuine affection and solicitude displayed for the safety of Garfield than in the bowed forms of those gentle nuns, prostrate in prayer in that humble adobe on the fringe of civilization.

Scarcely had the excitement over the fate of the martyred president died away ere a cloudburst came, lest life and living in Tucson might grow to be monotonous! The summer rains last for six weeks in that town, and before the cloudburst, four inches of rain fell in less than three-quarters of an hour, quite a respectable rain even for Tucson.

Across the street from our home was an adobe house that had been newly painted and furnished throughout. I looked that way and saw a flood of muddy water running through its immaculate interior. The town itself was all but submerged, the streets a perfect sheet of water.

Adjoining the ill-fated house of our neighbor was another adobe to which a bride had been brought from New York but two days before. As the walls of the adobe cracked and ran together again like so much ginger bread, a wagon drove up to carry away the hysterical bride, so thoroughly frightened

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

that she was only able to emit a series of piercing screams!

“ Why did I leave my mother, oh, why did I leave my mother? ” until the air rang with the echoes of her wailing.

The bride was on the shady side of fifty-five, and as I listened to her plaintive calls, I thought of that other cry:

“ I’m o’er young to leave my mother! ”

Our house was not affected by the water. It was built on the higher side of the street, and there was a doorway underneath the hall made for just such emergencies, with a way to let the water out, rather than up and into the house. I had a Mexican break open this doorway with an axe, the poor fellow worked up to his knees in water, and the hundred foot lot surrounding the place looked like a miniature lake after he had finished his task.

Our Chinese was as faithful during that cloudburst and as valuable as he had been in every emergency which he met with us during our life in the new country. His first thought was ever for our safety and welfare, and I am glad of an opportunity to say a good word for the son of an abused race, for after his years of service with our family, he merited full well the words:

THE YEAR AT TUCSON

“ Well done, thou good and faithful servant! ”

The great danger threatened by a cloudburst in Tucson may not be realized by people of to-day until it is known that in those days a ton or more of earth was thrown over every cactus roof in order to keep the adobes cool, and with incessant rain much less than with a cloudburst, there was always the danger of the roof falling in and the earth smothering the occupants of the house.

After the cloudburst, Tucson was shut off from the outside world for fully two weeks, no mail coming in and no food supplies, parts of the newly made railroad from Yuma to Tucson having been washed away in the twinkling of an eye. During that time, I kept house with no butter, no eggs, very little milk. The town depended upon the water from a spring which was peddled around from house to house. I did manage to obtain some Chinese sugar and to exist, after a fashion.

Butter was a luxury which I scarcely ever tasted during that time at Tucson; it had to be shipped in from California and there were then no refrigerator cars. In crossing the desert the jars of butter were melted into liquid oil, and as ice was twenty cents a pound in Tucson, only the enormously rich could afford to boast always of a plentiful supply.

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

After the excitement of the cloudburst had worn away, I was awakened one night by the clatter of horses' feet and the pitiful cries of a woman:

"He has been bitten by a rattlesnake. For God's sake, get a doctor quick," the cry filled with all the agony of a despairing mother's broken heart.

The mother was hurrying her six-year-old son to the Mexican family next door, crying for help as she tenderly lifted the little sufferer out of the rude wagon. She lived on a ranch a few miles out of the town, and the trip could not be made in the heat of the day, hence the wild night ride.

The little lad had gone to the well barefooted, at sundown, stepped on a rattlesnake and was instantly bitten in the heel by the poisonous reptile. The mother picked up the fatally wounded child, her mother heart telling her that he was in the grip of Death.

As the mother reached our door, a man of the town happened to be riding by on horse back. Like the wind he was off for a physician, but before he had arrived the soul of the little one had hearkened to the call of its Maker and only the agonized cries of the bereft mother broke the silence of the night.

Tucson filled with the many similar experiences that will remain with me forever,

THE YEAR AT TUCSON

brought its own share of suffering to me. For weeks, I lingered between life and death, fast in the grip of typhoid fever. I had reached the point where the physicians told me I had better arrange my property affairs and make known any wishes I might have in regard to my funeral. Cheerful news for a sick woman miles removed from kindred, but I sent for Judge Charles Silent, now of Los Angeles, and did truly make my last will and testament.

That I was near unto death may best be understood in the light of an experience of that sick room. My maid had been leaving a glass of water and a cracker beside my bed—real evidences of solicitude in Tucson—and the cracker had tempted a rat, when it failed to tempt me. One night when alone in the room, I felt a hard lump in the back of my heavy hair. I tossed from side to side in an effort to find a spot free from what I thought were tangles, when I found that the tangles must be removed before I could rest. Accordingly I put my hand in my hair. Horrors! A rat was entangled in its meshes and vainly trying to extricate itself. Too ill to be mindful of the danger, too ill even to feel a pang of fright, I helped the rat free himself from the tresses, and fell into a dreamless sleep.

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

My father at that time was in New York working for the territory and for himself, as men have a habit of doing now and then. He was purchasing arms for Arizona, as the Indians were growing more desperate and defiant, and at times he was trying to float an Arizona copper mine upon which he held a six months' option. He tried to convince the New York financiers that the "Jerome" copper mine was a fortune maker, but they would not listen to him and credited his enthusiasm to his zeal for opening the western country. He lost his option and years later Senator Clark of Montana obtained the "Jerome," now known as the Clark mines, and the source of perhaps the greatest share of the Clark millions.

Just as I was recovering from the fever, I was sitting in the corral back of our house when the report came to me that Fort Apache nearby had been wiped out and that all the officers were killed. All at that fort were friends of mine and the news was freighted with distress for me. On the morrow, however, I learned that the report was exaggerated, and that the officers had successfully beaten off the attack, which was picturesque in the extreme.

The old Indian chief led the attack on the fort, rode into the corral at Fort Apache

THE YEAR AT TUCSON

when it was filled with officers and men, and threw up his spear, whirling it and catching it as it fell—a signal of defiance such as was used in the border raids of Scotland. His bravery went for naught and the white men saved the day against the courageous red men of the plains.

The paper that brought the news of the safety of the men at the fort, however, brought other dismal news to me, the news of the burning of Morell's warehouse in New York City. It was the first warehouse built in the upper part of the city and the residents made a practice of storing their priceless treasures there when they left the city.

When leaving New York we had stored at Morell's, all these belongings that we considered too precious to take with us to the west—and now all was in flames!

Small wonder that the fever lingered and that I was finally sent home to New York to recuperate. In all our household experiences, my father was the admiral of the crew, my mother the captain, and I the executive officer—now the domestic ship was to be left to steer itself, unofficered, my mother having previously been compelled to return to New York to regain her health.

When life is young, however, and the warm blood courses through the veins, it is

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

not so easy to die. The world was waiting with its arms filled with roses, even though Tucson seemed so cold and cheerless and I was not averse to staying yet a little while, to gather a few of the flowers of life and living. When I said good-bye to Tucson and started for New York and home, I could hear again as though in a happy dream, the cry of the fellow traveler at Yuma:

“ New York—well, if not for two years, then, at least, for a day! ”

My father soon joined us in New York and we made our home in that city and in Washington, my father spending the time writing his memoirs. From there we went to Point Pleasant on the Jersey coast.

FINIS

WHILE we were living at Point Pleasant my father had so severe an attack of pñeumonia that his physician ordered him to Los Angeles. Having but recently returned from the baby town of Monrovia, where he had recovered from a somewhat similar attack, the physician was enthusiastic over the beneficial qualities of the climate of Southern California.

My father had always planned to return to California to make a home for mother and myself, "where we might live our lives in the delightful climate amidst its beautiful scenery," as father liked to put it; for he believed that the San Gabriel Valley, which to him included as in the old California days, all of Los Angeles Valley as well, with its mountains and sea views and its great oaks, was the most beautiful country he had ever seen.

His business would not permit him to leave at that time, had not ill health forced his hand, and so we came across on the Southern Pacific, reaching Los Angeles in the midst of

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

a heavy rain Christmas Eve in '87. We were met at the River station by our friend Judge Silent and his son and driven through slush and mud, over unpaved streets to a little hotel on Main Street near the Temple Block, where, as a great favor, rooms had been secured for us. The city was crowded and it was hard to find lodgings.

Christmas Day dawned, a brilliant winter day filled with sunshine and tempered with a touch of the delightful sea breeze, a typical California winter day.

We were taken for a long drive, during which the palms and contrasting Norfolk Island pines called forth our admiration and our heavy eastern wraps soon became oppressive. We stopped at a large house bordered with fine pepper and Indian rubber trees, the well kept lawns a delight in mid-winter and as we gathered up our wraps, Judge Silent remarked that we would leave them at this house.

A lovely young girl with rippling golden hair and blue eyes came down the steps of the house to meet us. She was his daughter and her youth completed a picture of a happy Los Angeles home—the home of Judge Silent, where we had our Christmas dinner.

A few days later my father and mother found quarters in the Marlborough Hotel,

FINIS

now Mrs. Caswell's Marlborough School for Girls but Mrs. Silent kept me for a while in her hospitable home. In that same house as well as at their delightful mountain ranch, the Silents have ever since made me feel as much at home as a woman can feel outside of her very own place.

We remained many months at the Marlborough renewing old friendships and forming new ones. It was hard to find a furnished house, but finally we secured the well kept home of army friends who were leaving it to get closer to the street cars, for Los Angeles was still headquarters for the Department of Arizona.

Our first visitor was Mrs. Henry T. Lee still living in Los Angeles, who brought my mother a great bunch of dark red roses, while Mrs. George King brought us a loaf of bread of her own baking; so our first dinner under a roof that was ours, though only rented, was brightened by the graceful kindness of neighboring friends.

My father had resigned from the army when the war was over that he might be free to look after his business interests, but in 1889 his friends were trying to obtain his restoration as Major General. This required his presence in the east, so he returned there in the early fall of that year.

RECOLLECTIONS OF ELIZABETH BENTON FRÉMONT

His friends were successful in their efforts and in April of 1890, his appointment was confirmed by the Senate, bringing to him peace of mind and relief from care.

He was detained in the east winding up all business affairs, and was taken suddenly ill with what would now be called ptomaine poisoning and died within two days.

My eldest brother, the niece we had brought up, and our friend Dr. Morton, were with him to the end, and they did not tell him how very ill he was. Just as he was sinking into unconsciousness he spoke of soon leaving for home.

"Which home, General?" asked Dr. Morton.

"California, of course," whispered my father, and as the words died on his lips, he sank into that sleep from which he never awakened. My mother and I knew nothing of his illness until the news of his death was telegraphed to us. My mother was very ill for some time afterwards, and one of the very hard things to bear in those first days following his death was the daily arrival of his letters, filled with his plans and hopes for the future and for our lives in Los Angeles.

Friends gathered around us and did all that loving sympathy could do to help my mother bear her loss. She had known my



The Los Angeles home given to Mrs. Frémont



